

CULTURALIST REVOLUTIONS

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of  
The requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
Department of American Studies

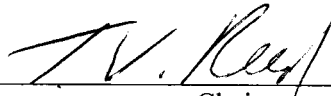
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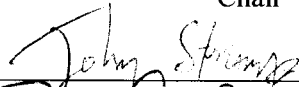
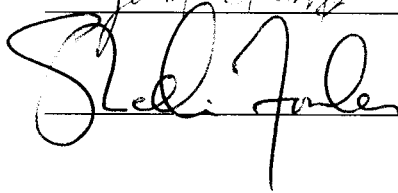
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The members of the Committee appointed to examine the dissertation/thesis of  
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Chair

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## CULTURALIST REVOLUTIONS

### Abstract

By James Joseph Neiworth, Ph.D.  
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May 2005

Chair: T. V. Reed

U.S.-centric, capitalistic development depends upon a possessive individualism that naturalizes a transcendent, exceptional "Americanness" by privileging maleness, whiteness, heterosexuality and class position. This process of privileging involves a double maneuver: (1) ideologically, those forces that oppose progressive change rearticulate their protection of traditionally oppressive hierarchies as a defense of a fictively embattled majority-as-minority and (2) the material power of dominance is hidden from criticism as dominant groups attempt a distorted class alliance by relying on a call to defend this "tradition" in conjunction with those that suffer the most even as they defend it. Economic and social justice is traded for a psychic reward: the ability to define

themselves as part of, in some or any sense, *the* valued class.

The first chapter defines and models the theoretical approach of the rest of the volume. The second chapter is an examination of the labor theory of value from its most basic premises through the nuances of productive and unproductive labor in order to see who, according to central theorists, can be said to be members of the proletarian class. The next chapter examines the Marxist theories of imperialism that combine a challenge to the Eurocentric predisposition of some theorists with an examination of Marxist anti-imperialist thought that counters this. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the labor theory of value that allows for an expansion of the revolutionary subject that conforms to the reality of socialist revolution as it has existed in the last century. The next five chapters examine U.S. domestic and foreign policy (U.S. welfare, the federal Defense of Marriage Act, U.S. think tanks, the war on Vietnam, and the war on Afghanistan and Iraq, respectively) in order to examine the ideological and material erasures that underlie the possessive individualism that naturalizes the transcendent, exceptional "Americanness" I described above. The final

chapter is a reflection on the Marxist movement at the present time.

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## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Kristine Enkerud. Thank you for your encouragement, intelligence and insight throughout the writing of this dissertation. Thank you for your love and support throughout my life.



**Chapter One:**  
***By Way of Introduction, a Bad American Marxist***

But if the designing of the future and the proclamation of ready-made solutions for all time is not our affair, then we realize all the more clearly what we have to accomplish in the present—I am speaking of a *ruthless critique of everything existing*, ruthless in two senses: The criticism must not be afraid of its own conclusions, nor of conflict with the powers that be.

Karl Marx, *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, 1844

Just like the Olympic Games, participatory democracy appears as a portion of the coverage in the U.S. popular media once every four years. In the 2004 presidential election cycle, political commentators spoke about a great divide in America, a balkanization. According to these analysts, the country seemed equally divided between which pro-capitalist candidate would be better for U.S. businesses, which candidate was more patriotic, which candidate God preferred, whose values were consonant with “American” values, or who could kill America’s enemies more efficiently.

In 2004, as in the previous election cycle, Bush’s lack of polish and perceived lack of intellectual depth seemed to set him at a disadvantage. On September 30, when George W. Bush and John Kerry met at the University of Miami for the first of the three televised national

debates, Bush's performance seemed a perfect example of his deficiencies as he gave what might be the worst debate performance by a presidential candidate since they were first televised. Asked by moderator Jim Lehrer whether the country would be under more of a threat of attack during a Kerry presidency, Bush argued he was confident in his own re-election and that the war in Iraq "no doubt about it, it's tough. It's hard work. It's incredibly hard. You know why? Because an enemy realizes the stakes. The enemy understands a free Iraq will be a major defeat in their ideology of hatred. That's why they're fighting so vociferously." Later he let the viewing public know that "I wake up every day thinking about how best to protect America. That's my job" and that "There's a lot of really good people working hard to do so. It's hard work." In respect to casualties experienced by Americans during the war, Bush said of the continuing conflict that "It's--and it's hard work. I understand how hard it is. I get the casualty reports every day. I see on the TV screens how hard it is. But it is necessary work." He noted that the United States was training Iraqis soldiers "so they can do the hard work." Referencing the prospect of a summit hosted by Japan between Middle Eastern regional powers,

Bush stated that "we're making progress. It is hard work. It is hard work to go from a tyranny to a democracy. It's hard work to go from a place where people get their hands cut off or executed to a place where people are free. But it's necessary work, and a free Iraq is going to make this world a more peaceful place." When speaking about an experience with the wife of a soldier who died in the conflict, Bush states "You know, it's hard work to try to love her as best as I can, knowing full well that the decision I made caused her loved one to be in harm's way." As for the war, "Yeah, we're getting the job done. It's hard work. Everybody knows it's hard work" and finally, in his closing statement, "We've done a lot of hard work together over the last three and a half years. We've been challenged and we've risen to those challenges. We've climbed the mighty mountain and seen the valley below. It's a valley of peace" (CNN LexisNexis). While definitely comical, the repetition was also eerily disconcerting. It mirrored, even in its Bush-like syntax, a simple quotation from a presentation Stuart Hall gave at the University of Minnesota that George Lipsitz placed at the top of his article "The Struggle for Hegemony": "Hegemonizing is hard work" (146).

In the weeks following Bush's second victory a fascinating if simplistic version of hegemony appeared. As red and blue color-coded voting maps popped up on television station after television station, why, wondered all those who believed that Kerry was the logical choice, would "red staters" vote against their own interests? How could these "red staters" identify with a philosophy that, to Kerry supporters at least, was so obviously detrimental to themselves? In essence, how could these voters, as one British paper asked, be so stupid?

Even if it helps those of us on the left sleep better at night, even if it makes us laugh to read collections of Bush's verbal gaffes, and even if it makes us feel empowered to parody it on protest signs, it is dangerous to think that those that occupy positions of power on the right are slow-witted or stupid. They have done their homework, and while those on the left tend to dismiss their best selling popular pronouncements on American culture, they are more than willing to read what is produced by the left.

When opponents of Marxism are not reminding the public about Marxism being dead, dead, oh-so-dead, they seem to be doing a rather good job of unapologetically rearticulating

Marxist strategies in favor of their own policies. In the *International Gramsci Society Newsletter* Charlie Bertsch writes about the surprise he felt upon learning Rush Limbaugh's affinity for Antonio Gramsci. In Rush's reapplication of Gramsci in *See, I Told You So*, he argues that the left has utilized popular culture in order to become a hegemonic power. Rush "concedes the terms of the debate" to Gramsci and "elaborates a notion of 'Culture War' that he admits to having found in the theories of that 'obscure Italian communist'" (13). Cato Institute libertarians have a few uses for Lenin. In addressing the privatization of social security more than two decades ago authors argued that "we would do well to draw from a Leninist strategy"—they should build a coalition, crush the opposition and get ready for a long struggle because "as Lenin knew, to be a successful revolutionary, one must also be patient and consistently plan for real reform" (Butler and Germanis 547, 556). Even Grover Norquist, the infamous anti-tax reformer, is not averse to utilizing revolutionary inspired rhetoric in favor of his reputed "market Leninism" (Easton 17), waking up each morning to ask himself "what am I going to do to move the revolution forward?" (Easton 279). In his famous Eleventh Thesis, Marx argued that "the

philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it" and that the working class would emerge as the motor of that change (*Selected Writings* 171). Just prior to the election, Ronald Suskind culls a quotation from an aide at the White House that had no problems depicting the administration's occupation of that position with a post-marxist, post-modernist tilt. "We're an empire now," Suskind reports that he told him, "and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you're studying that reality—judiciously as you will—we'll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that's how things will sort out. We're history's actors. . . and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do" (51). With all of the ex-Trotskyites that became the intellectual forbearers of neoconservatism, one is left to wonder what a pro-capitalist permanent revolution would look like, if the citizens of the Middle East are not experiencing the first front of it now (Heilbrunn 112).

This is not an attempt to argue for a conspiratorial version of history. To do that would be to pretend that these elements are hidden, but they are not. It is important to examine how and why the neoconservative

movements co-opted revolutionary rhetoric in the pursuit of pre-emptive counter-revolution, how and why the center drifts ever rightward, and how and why the left is struggling against a premature burial. While the message emanating from the right may seem simplistic, the machinery that allows them to get that message heard and repeated ad nauseum is quite sophisticated. In a cogent analysis of this process aimed at a popular audience, Thomas Frank, a founding editor of *The Baffler*, a journal of cultural criticism, problematizes both the divide and the false prospect that the two dominant parties actually differ in an important respect, which he calls economic populism. Examining the history of his home state, Frank demonstrates that, once a hotbed of socialist thought often wedded with religious fervor, Kansas lost those voices that argued for economic justice but never lost the martyrdom that lay beneath it. And at the center of this martyrdom is the mobilization of what Frank calls the "plen-T-plaint," the chain of indignities done to authentic America by elitist class enemies. He quotes an author at *American Enterprise* as an example "'I'm stupid,'" wrote this author, "'and if you're reading this, you probably are too" (120). Frank continues on, cataloguing advertisements, listserv

exchanges and the plethora of books written by folks like Ann Coulter, Ralph Reed, John Leo and David Horowitz that tap into this martyrdom. In his conclusion, he argues that the "anti-knowledge" that filters through his home state will eventually be displaced by the economic consequences of pro-capitalist policies. Ideology as a replacement for economic justice can only last for so long, especially as the antipathy "between the small towns [conservatives] profess to love and the market forces that are slowly grinding those small towns back into the red-state dust" become more and more apparent (248). This eventuality provides an opportunity for a true left that does not fear a reexamination of Marxist thought.

In introducing myself and my work here, I think it is very important to define specifically what I am saying, what I am *not* saying, and what I am trying to do writing this in this specific form. I am a bad American Marxist. As some would charge, I am bad at being an American for even considering the relevance of a living body of theory that all good Americans would or should consider dead. I believe that capitalism socializes risk, exploitation, limitation and labor while it individualizes privilege, power, security and profit. As part of this process



humanity is alienated from the land, from their own labor, from the means of production, and from each other.

According to others, as an overtly voluntarist, left Marxist that does not dismiss the contribution of world system analysis—particularly the “third world” theorists whose work provided the foundation for this analysis yet are often silenced by those voices that speak from the core to the core about the centrality (for good or bad) of the core—I am a bad Marxist with an even worse understanding of class. Moreover, my location as a white, heterosexual, petty bourgeois, male, American writer should and will call into question my ability to mobilize any theory in a way that does not in itself recenter the U.S. and recenter (for good or bad) these very descriptors. This book is a critique of the ways in which U.S. domestic and imperial policy work in concert to do just that.

The United States is the latest inheritor in a long line of Eurocentric, capitalist expansion that has resulted in the current interconnected stage of US dominated imperialism, US exceptionalism and the exceptionalism of the individual. By “stage” I do not mean the kind of linear, Stalinist five stage model of world development that will result in some predictable and inevitable

realization in a communist utopia. As Samir Amin, Giovanni Arrighi, Andre Gunder Frank and Immanuel Waalerstein have argued in *Transforming the Revolution: Social Movements and the World System*, "None of us believes that the process of social transformation to come will be facile, and none of us believes there is any guarantee that the outcome will inevitably be progressive. But all of us agree that the present world-system, with its current structure (current meaning for the past several centuries) cannot survive eternally" (11).

Concisely, my thesis is that U.S.-centric, capitalistic development depends upon a possessive individualism that naturalizes a transcendent, exceptional "Americanness" by privileging maleness, whiteness, heterosexuality and class position. This process of privileging involves a double maneuver: (1) ideologically, those forces that oppose progressive change rearticulate their protection of traditionally oppressive hierarchies as a defense of a fictively embattled majority-as-minority and (2) the material power of dominance is hidden from criticism as dominant groups attempt a distorted class alliance by relying on a call to defend this "tradition" sent out to those that suffer the most even as they defend

it. Economic and social justice is traded for a psychic reward: the ability to define themselves as part of, in some or any sense, *the* valued group.

This logic determines that the essence of socially valorized positions is inherent. As complement to this, that which devalues social position also inheres. In reference to imperial policy, the fact of exploitation is ideologically subordinated beneath a white-capitalist's burden, and foreign policy becomes a rationalization of dominance that celebrates oppression in the name of a developmentalism that yokes the future of the world to the future of U.S.-capitalism itself. In *Discourse on Colonialism*, Aimé Césaire predicts what this future will look like where he writes:

What am I driving at? At this idea: that no one colonizes innocently, that no one colonizes with impunity either; that a nation which colonizes, that a civilization which justifies colonization—and therefore force—is already a sick civilization, a civilization which is morally diseased, which irresistibly, progressing from one consequence to another, one denial to another, calls for its Hitler, I mean its punishment.

As Césaire rightly and movingly argues, there is a relationship that binds colonizer and colonized together. Imperialism is not a natural and uncontested economic stage in a moral and ideological vacuum. It occurs with an intentional brutality that positions the bulk of the citizens of the globe in the service of a few who asymmetrically benefit from the concomitant redefinition of the colonized subject as developmentally below the stage of existence naturally associated with those lucky enough to have been born within pockets of power and privilege specked across the world. Those benefits that accrue to this privileged order of beings is contingent upon a constant redefinition of who can or who cannot speak, who is or is not the subject of history, and who is and should be in control of those factors of production that determine the ability of the world's population to sustain and provide for itself.

But, again, this polemic is not revolution. Indeed, the self-righteousness of the left, myself included, can be as much of a detraction as a benefit to progressive change. In what I have described above, an oppressor class valorizes an ideological position to obscure their own class location in order to justify the continuation of

their superior hierarchical position. If that structure of dominance is replicated in the name of progressive change it is still unjust. In the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Friere makes this insight an explicit directive for those that believe that they are working with the oppressed. Friere writes that "we can legitimately say that in the process of oppression someone oppresses someone else; we cannot say that in the process of revolution someone liberates someone else, nor that yet someone liberates himself, but rather that men in communion liberate each other" (128). For Friere, following Gramsci, what separates humanity from the rest of the animal kingdom is the possibility of *praxis*—the combination of theory and reflection with action. To concentrate on just words is simply "verbalism," while acting without theory and reflection is mere "activism" (75). Any group that attempts to manipulate and control the people they seek to work with deny these same people *praxis*, that which makes them human. They dehumanize as those oppressors they seek to replace dehumanize. He writes "leaders who deny *praxis* to the oppressed thereby invalidate their own *praxis*. By imposing their word on others, they falsify that word and establish a contradiction between their methods and their

objectives" (120). Beneath these hierarchizations is a commitment to a kind of Gnosticism that allows for a dualistic rather than a dialectic view of materiality/ideology. In each case, the realm of discourse, the realm of thought, is allowed to break free from material conditions. The political agent ascends the ladder of theory and speaks down to and for the pre-conscious masses below. According to Friere "if the people cannot be trusted, there is no reason for liberation; in this case the revolution is not even carried out *for the people*, but '*by*' the people for the leaders: a complete self-negation" (124).

While Friere highlights how false revolutionary ideology flattens out distinctions by pretending that they do not exist—that those who have the privilege of a specific knowledge are destined to define the contours and content of struggle—he also highlights the need for making comradeship a material fact. He asserts that those that wish to work with the oppressed must cultivate "the thinking of the *comrade*" rather than "the thinking of the *master*." Those that believe they should or could be leaders "must 'die,' in order to be reborn through and with the oppressed" (127).

By positioning "the oppressed" as I have just done, however, I run the risk of objectifying this subject position as an "authentic" insider that can play off of a construction of an "outsiderness" that I can occupy and thus escape the specificity of our differing positions by my using Césaire's work, for example, as what legitimizes my entry into my field. In this sense, I am reminded of the work done by Ann duCille in her 1994 essay "The Occult of True Black Womanhood: Critical Demeanor and Black Feminist Studies." In this article, duCille discusses a tendency to "demean through demeanor" the work written by African American women in works written by white women and white and African American men. Looking at essays and books by Houston Baker, John Callahan, Shelly Fisher Fiskin, Jane Gallop, Missy Kubitschek, Deborah McDowell and Adrienne Rich, duCille finds a consistency in these critics' use of African American women authors. The scholars she critiques demean the work of African American women by denying the specific historicity of their works (or even their existence) as they legitimize their entry into the field of African American studies through personal narration and expressions of their overcoming personal

guilt or personal myopia in order to speak on/for/about African American women.

Often, critics use the actual bodies of African Americans as interlocutors that justify their entry into critical scholarship. Their experiences with African Americans provide a personal transformation that allows them to cover over difference rather than take seriously the existence of the tradition that they are studying as a tradition in and of itself, not a "anybody-can-play pick-up game" for new academics "discovering" the field of African American women writers and theorists (603). She states that "the white person inherits a wisdom, an agelessness, perhaps even a racelessness that entitles him or her to the raw materials of another's life and culture but, of course, not to the Other's condition." These ideological moves "often occur in the forewords, afterwords, rationales, even apologias white scholars affix to their would-be scholarly readings of the black Other" and provide an ideological sleight of hand. They "acknowledge the 'outsider' status of the authors—their privileged position as white women or as men—even as they insist on the rightness to their entry into and the significance of their impact on the fields of black literature and history" (614). Overall, the kind of



critic that duCille is taking aim at yanks the objects of his or her study out of history and de-politicizes their work in a move to elide the political significance of this history with the inclusion of their own body of scholarship over the top of the body of the object of his or her study. She states that African American women's bodies have been used to "make connections—connections that in this instance enable scholars working in exhausted fields to cross over into the promised lands of the academy" (623).

Thus, my discomfort with the prospect of generating-while-describing room for theoretical and scholarly study is coupled with my attempt to navigate through what is necessarily a vexed process. If my work is to avoid legitimizing a pursuit of an academic version of *lebensraum*, my utilization of material generated from activists and writers in locations that exist in opposition to the kinds of political, economic and social dominations that define "American" imperialism should not function as a co-optation of voice that moves what is materially oppositional into a realm of discursive opposition in which my writing of a work (like this one) is in itself an activity that reenacts imperialist constructions of revolutionary others as interesting objects of study that

are never quite subjects. A process that could be reflected, of course, in my providing space for *their* theorizing within a space that helps me accomplish the goals necessary for *my* career as a writer.

An important aspect of that privilege is the ability to ignore the asymmetricality of this relationship if one can. And one most certainly can. Imperialism seen only in the alterity of discourse and ideology, untethered to material-economic reality, becomes a perspective on what other people did or are doing to "other" peoples—scary and sensational stories that exist in a world transcendable by discovering the keys to a self definition that gives a subject speaking from a position of privilege the ability to opt out of the fact that he or she is "embedded" in a political, economic and social hierarchy by simply writing so. And quoting a few lines from Césaire of Friere, for example. The privileged can ignore their own imbrication in networks of power. They can opt out by calling challenges to their positions "identity politics" without paying attention to the politics of their own identity in academia (or elsewhere). Solidarity on paper is a fictive solidarity if the facts of privilege and the benefits that accrue from it are things that someone who is paid to read

and to write expects to escape accountability for by utilizing a position of privilege to call that position into question. On the level of my own personal activity, if I were to do that, I would be allowing myself to become disengaged from the contours of struggle and contestation in order to keep the contours of my life removed from the ability of others to call my intentions, my actions and my work into question. In essence, it would be a utilization of my own position as legitimized by the academy to delegitimize any challenge that could create a change in perspective that would de-couple my "ownership" of theory and practice in productive ways. It would mean foreclosing the possibility of anything but self-directed change. The challenge to my own activities is reflected, of course, on a larger political level by examining who it is that is legitimized to set agendas for organizations, to establish curricula, to "envision" directions of the university, of policy, or of society.

Thus, my introduction in a micro sense reflects my praxis as expressed in this work in a macro sense. In the second chapter I go to the heart of Marxism, the labor theory of value, in order to examine its basic premises through the nuances of productive and unproductive labor in

order to see who, according to central theorists, is said to occupy the position of the proletarian class. In the next, I examine the historiography of Marxist theories of imperialism. I combine a challenge to the Eurocentric predisposition of some theorists with an examination of some anti-Eurocentric manifestations of Marxist anti-imperialist thought along with a concluding discussion of the labor theory of value that allows for an expansion of the revolutionary subject that conforms to the reality of socialist revolution as it has existed in the last century. The next five chapters examine U.S. domestic and foreign policy (U.S. welfare, the federal Defense of Marriage Act, U.S. think tanks, the war on Vietnam, and the war on Afghanistan and Iraq, respectively) in order to examine the ideological and material erasures that underlie the capitalist possessive individualism that naturalizes that transcendent, exceptional "Americanness" I described above. The final chapter is a reflection on the Marxist movement at the present time.

## **Chapter Two: *Being Unproductive***

In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels argued that the "history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle." In this view, each era throughout time can be differentiated from other eras on the basis of the exploitative relations that manifest in each period. Throughout time "oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes" (89). Capitalism is the most recent in this series of social formations and is characterized by the exploitation of wage-labor by a parasitic, exploiting class. In order for a communist society to develop, the exploited class must control state power as it removes capitalist economic and social relationships in a transitional phase, a negation of the former order. In turn, that transitional phase must itself be negated as a communist ideology becomes dominant, under which "the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all" (111). Despite the assertion of anti-communist writers, however, it is the hope of Marxists that

the transition from socialism to communism would bring about the end of exploitation and the dissolution of classes. According to Marx and Engels:

If the proletariat during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to organize itself as a class, if, by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of classes generally, and will thereby have abolished its supremacy as a class. (*Manifesto* 111)

In his *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Marx criticizes the German Workers' Party for missing this specific point (17-18). Politically, this was Lenin's desire as he explains in *State and Revolution*, stating that "only in communist society, when the resistance of the capitalists has been completely crushed, when the capitalists have disappeared, when there are no classes . . . only then 'the state . . . ceases to exist,' and it 'becomes possible to speak of freedom'" (106).

Exactly what constitutes membership in that exploited class that comes to power in the transitional phase—who is defined as the revolutionary subject—is a prospect that has, throughout the history of living communist movements, been a subject of contention. The labor theory of value, the cornerstone of the Marxist economic definition of the capitalist era, defines the process where an exploited class serves beneath a parasitic class.

Historically, all human beings in every type of society have been defined by their capacity to transform nature through their own labor. In simple commodity production, an individual that produces a good performs concrete labor that creates a use-value—it satisfies a need of some kind. In economies where commodities are traded, this labor also can be said to have an exchange-value. Thus, the product of labor exists as an answer to a specific need as well as at an additional level of abstraction: through exchange, different products are interchangeable with other goods at a generalized level. Labor itself mirrors this in that, at the level of the production of use-values it is concrete, but, given the exchangeability of different types of labors at a general level, it is also abstract. Marx further specifies,

however, that the activity of exchange does not create value in and of itself; rather, all exchange-values represent "congealed" labor. Exchange-value, then, is an appearance that covers over the creation of value through labor.

In non-capitalist production, the worker is the owner of the product of his or her own labor as well as the process of labor itself. In simple capitalist commodity production, though, workers are placed in the position of having to sell their own labor as a commodity itself. Capitalists exchange money for the workers' labor-power, the ability of all workers to produce, in order to attain value beyond that payment. Thus, workers must work beyond the time they would need to work to create commodities equivalent to their own wages, and the additional value created by them in the form of surplus value that accrues to the capitalist.

The creation of value is itself a social relation that is transformed by the system of capitalist production into a commodity. The worker is alienated from his or her own actual participation in their creation of value through labor because of the function of the market. Marx writes that "the labour of the private individual manifests itself



as an element of the total labor of society only through the relations which the act of exchange establishes between the products, and, through their mediation, between the producers." The deviousness of this obfuscation is that it naturalizes what is specific to the era of capitalism as it hides this naturalization from the exploited. Marx writes that "to the producers, therefore, the social relations between their private labours appear as what they are, i.e. they do not appear as direct social relations between persons in their work, but rather as material relations between persons and social relations among things." Within this the exploited are depicted as free sellers of a commodity, their labor, as though it is a function separable from their existence—which denies what Marx has demonstrated to be true. Since labor has always existed as a part of humanity as a species-being, the "sale" of labor is a dehumanization of mankind. Marx writes that "it is nothing but the definite social relation between men themselves which assumes here, for them, the fantastic form of relations between things" (*Capital* 165-166).

Marx further specifies, however, that not all labor performed by wage workers should be considered productive labor. Some labor, that which does not add value to

surplus, is paid from profit or surplus itself. Following this distinction in particular, theorists have grappled with what consequences this has in reference to class consciousness, to the declining rate of profit, and the boundaries that could or should be placed around the category of the proletariat. The result of this has been the creation of a rather exclusive, west-centered category.

The definition of what is "productive" is important within the labor theory of value in order to understand parasitic relationships within capitalism. Marx states that it is "only bourgeois narrow-mindedness" that will "fancy itself very wise in giving the answer that all labour which produces anything at all, which has any kind of result, is by that very fact productive labor" (393). For Marx, the productive worker is that worker who generates value within the labor theory of value. The productive worker "not only replaces an old value, but creates [sic] a new one; that he materialises more labour-time in his product than is materialised in the product that keeps him in existence as a worker" and that "labour is productive which creates a surplus-value not for itself, but for the owners of the conditions of production" (*Theories of Surplus Value* 153).

Any worker that produces surplus value in any kind of labor is a productive worker. Marx specifies this again and again with a variety of examples "an actor, for example, or even a clown, according to this definition, is a productive laborer if he works in the service of a capitalist (an entrepreneur)" (*Theories of Surplus Value* 157). This is significant for Marx because he is writing against those who reacted negatively against Smith's original definitions. These theorists, attempting to justify their own existence within the unproductive group living off of the surplus generated by labor, attempted to extend this justification to a number of other classes. The actor, for example, could be seen as "producing" a performance. The clown "produces" laughter. But it is not the physical act of labor or the physical act of production that matters in the labor theory of value, it is the creation of more value than is actually consumed by the worker through wages; it is the social relationship between capitalist and worker that results in the siphoning off of value. Marx writes that this definition of productive labor "is a definition of labor which is derived not from its content or its result, but from its particular social form" (158).

Unproductive labor, on the other hand, Marx defines as either that labor which is paid from surplus or profit or that labor that is non-capitalist in nature. Marx believed that, over time, capitalism would break apart all pre-existing non-capitalist social relations and, to a greater and greater degree, unproductive labor would become smaller and smaller. He states that "to the extent that capital conquers the whole of production, and therefore the home and petty form of industry—in short industry intended for self-consumption—disappears, it is clear that the unproductive laborers, those whose services are directly exchanged against revenue, will for the most part be performing only *personal* services, and only an inconsiderable part of them (like cooks, seamstresses, jobbing tailors and so on)" (159). At the time he was writing *Theories of Surplus Value*, he noted that the number of productive workers in factories was still far less than those that continued to work in the unproductive sector of personal service and petty commodity production. In "the factories, the total number of persons (managers included) employed in the factories properly so called of the United Kingdom was only 775,534, while the number of female servants in England alone amounted to 1 million" (201).

Savran and Tonak provide an interpretation of productive and unproductive labor that is both a defense of Marx's original formulation and an application of that formulation to modern labor markets. They begin by stating that "we believe that Marx's thinking on this issue is entirely coherent" (114). They state that ignoring this distinction will lead critics to miss a "major role in the determination of the respective magnitude of crucial variables of the capitalist economy" (116). Since the distinction specifies how much surplus is available for reinvestment, growth or expansion of production, "it immediately follows that it also has an impact on the rate of profit" (117). By looking at the growth of unproductive labor as a component of capitalist development within a nation, it is possible to see how as it grows it impacts the rate of profit.

In viewing what is new about the economy in the last few decades, they point to the rapid growth in the financial, consumer and social service sectors. In their interpretation, financial services stay in the unproductive commercial sphere, but consumer and social services are less easily defined. In an era of privatization, where even the limited safety nets once provided by government

are being done away with in favor of non-state solutions, more and more social service workers are working as productive laborers, a controversial assertion that has seen many proponents of labor theory at "loggerheads on this specific aspect" (133). While Marx made a distinction between a doctor that gives a patient a pill (unproductive) with the worker at a pill making factory that makes the pill that is given (productive), Savran and Tonak argue that a doctor who works for a for-profit hospital produces surplus value that accrues to the hospital and is thus productive. Unproductive labor, following Marx, is all labor paid from surplus or profit, primarily for capitalists' own pleasure, include "domestic servants, cooks, gardeners, chauffers, body guards, etc." Those workers that are paid wages and produce surplus labor are productive except for those employed in the sphere of circulation: "banks, insurance and mortgage companies, wholesale and retail trade." Those employed by the state in social services and in the "reproduction of the social order" are unproductive, but those that work in state owned facilities and produce surplus and those that work in transportation are productive. Transportation of commodities, according to Marx, is part of the circuit of

productive labor prior to commodities entrance into financial-commercial spheres. "Transportation and storage activities," Savran and Tonak argue "should in no way be conflated with the sphere of circulation" (131).

Many contemporary Marxian theorists would like to see the productive and unproductive distinction (if not the entirety of the labor theory of value) abandoned. David Laibman has argued that the "distinction plays no useful role, and should be dropped. The clear positive implication of this conclusion is that *all wage labor employed by capitalists creates value*" (64). Beneath the motivation for continuing the distinction, Laibman intuits a political motivation that often remains unsaid or explicitly discounted by those who are committed to its theoretical validity. He expresses this when discussing the transfer of title that occurs in commercial capitalism, which is discounted in the circuit of capital as a sector that is characterized as being unproductive. He states "it is parasitic, socially useless, and a feature of an inferior form of social organization! Why have so many Marxists been unwilling to own up to making judgments of this kind, relying instead on conceptual apparatuses that give an impression of grand objectivity and neutrality?"

(68). Laibman urges critics that seek to mobilize it to reflect upon the politics of doing so. He states that "Until we are sure why we want to assert in the first place that the labor of a quintessential proletarian (a steel mill worker or automobile assemblyline worker, say) is productive . . . the perennial issue of the value-productivity of bank tellers, advertising workers, or commodity jobbers seem insecurely motivated." (72)

Similarly, David Houston would prefer that Marxists make adjustments to the analysis of the full circuit of capital so that "all workers employed in the circuit of capital are productive of value and surplus value" (133). In his estimation, the distinction between productive and unproductive labor breaks down a single process into a series of discrete, atomized instances. He states that "I am arguing that the transformation of money capital, M, into production capital, P, is itself a productive activity integral to advanced capitalist circulation" (134). Thus the sphere of circulation is incorporated into commodity production as the last instance where value achieves its valorization. In the process of incorporation of all spheres of economic activity, all who work under capitalism are included in a single category. He states "all workers



taken as a whole employed by capital working under capitalist relations of production within the circuit of capital produce value" (135).

Laibman and Houston were reacting specifically to an article written by Simon Mohun, noted defender and theorist of the productive/unproductive distinction. In "Productive and Unproductive Labor in the Labor Theory of Value" Simon Mohun argues that "it is not possible both to maintain the labor theory of value and to dispense with its fundamental building blocks" and that "any Marxist perspective must insist on the ontological uniqueness of labor; otherwise there can be no *labor* theory of value" (31-32). For Mohun, as for Savran and Tonak, the distinction is scientific and neutral. For them it does not imply the judgment that Houston and Laibman argue lies beneath its usage. Laibman and Houston, however, are more in agreement with Marx's description than with Mohun, Savran and Tonak, however.

Marx was explicit in his association of unproductive labor with parasitism. In his configuration, unproductive workers are paid directly out of the surplus value that was created by the productive worker at the center of the labor theory of value. Associating the bourgeoisie with those that they believed were their polar opposites was an

overtly political move. Besides direct capitalist exploiters, he included bourgeois occupations of the "so-called 'higher grade' of workers—such as state officials, military people, artists, doctors, priests, judges, lawyers, etc." (174). The bourgeoisie "found it not at all pleasant to be relegated *economically* to the same class as clowns and menial servants and to appear merely as people partaking in the consumption, parasites on the actual producers (or rather agents of production)" (175). In response, the bourgeois political economists attempted to redefine labour broadly so that they could pretend that they "honored everyone by making him a 'productive labourer'" when in fact their conflict was not just with being included in the same category as those they felt superior to but also with being outside of the class that creates value—that class that, in the labor theory of value, is *the* valorized class (176). These unproductive "labours (or services, whether those of a prostitute or of the Pope) can only be paid for . . . out of the wages of the productive laborers" because "labourers produce the material basis of the subsistence, and consequently, the existence of the unproductive labourers." To Marx, a defense of the value of unproductive labor would be

preferable than an attempt to do away with it as a category. He writes that "even such people as Malthus are to be preferred, who directly defend the necessity and usefulness of 'unproductive labourers' and pure parasites" (176). While Marxist theorists might prefer to depoliticize the distinction, they do so at the danger of misunderstanding the politics of the distinction within Marx's construction of the labor theory of value. Not all Marxists avoid depoliticizing it, however. To the Maoist International Movement, for example, when critics argue that defining some workers as unproductive is "not meant by Marx to mean 'unnecessary' workers" they "are definitely wrong about Marx's attitude toward these workers" and that "in the context of Western Europe, the COMINTERN including Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin all believed that unproductive workers should not be counted as proletarian" (MIM Online).

Not only is the distinction a political one in terms of its definition of who is or is not productive, it is political in its application to struggle. Who is the revolutionary class if not the exploited? At one extreme sits those theorists who reject the need for a transitional period in which the exploited come to power. In some cases the working class disappears as the motor force of history.

In a speech at the congress of Communist Party of France, Georges Marchais, then the secretary general, stated plainly that "as for the proletariat, today it evokes the nucleus, the heart of the working class. While its role is essential, it does not represent the whole of the working class, nor, even more so, the whole of the workers from whom the socialist power that we envision will emanate." Marchais continues, stating that "what we propose to the workers, to our people, cannot be qualified as 'the dictatorship of the proletariat'" (Marchais 332). For Laclau and Mouffe, the "unity of the working class is . . . a symbolic unity" (11). Rather than revolutionary change in the economic structure, a gradual reformism can serve in its place: "The task of the Left therefore cannot be to renounce liberal-democratic ideology, but on the contrary, to deepen and expand it in the direction of a radical and plural democracy" (176). In these interpretations, the economic forces that structure class are de-emphasized while ideology and discourse expand as a reference for understanding struggle.

Other theories of class, however, specify the ways in which economic factors play at least as important a role as ideology. Four unique theories, generated by Erik Olin

Wright, Nicos Poulantzas, Theodore Resnick and Stephen Wolff, and Harry Braverman have been among the most influential attempts in the latter part of the last century to provide such definitions in the West.

Erik Olin Wright developed a theory of class that explicitly eschews the labor theory of value as a basis for class consciousness and class formation. In *Class, Crisis and the State*, Erik Olin Wright argued that class positions were determined through and experienced through domination, while exploitation "functioned more as a background concept" (56). Returning to exploitation, or at least making exploitation more of a central concept is important in this change for Wright because "exploitation implies a set of opposing material interests" (57). Later, in *Classes*, Wright develops a more nuanced framework for an examination of class, stating that "it is possible to restore the central thrust of the traditional Marxist concept of exploitation by making a distinction between what can be called 'economic oppression' and exploitation" (74). In this chapter, Wright takes the position argued by G. A. Cohen that Marxist exploitation can and should be decoupled from a moribund labor theory of value. Cohen states that "the relationship between the labour theory of

value and the concept of exploitation is one of mutual irrelevance" (202). Cohen rejects the theory, but hopes to retain its core, arguing, in his central distinction, that "[Laborers] do not create value, but they create what has value" (218). Commodities are things produced, and the value of those commodities is partially given to the laborer but mostly to the capitalist, creating a relation that Cohen equates directly with serfdom (222). Wright, using this distinction, is able here and elsewhere to expand upon the number of class positions in a given historical moment as well as the complex interrelations that provide opportunity for struggle. He states that he has "argued that, in addition to the relationship to the ownership of the means of production, the linkage of jobs to the process of exploitation is shaped by their relation to domination within production (authority) and to the control over expertise and skills" (*Class Counts* 523). What does drop out of the distinction here is the concrete economic characterization of the capitalist era's mode of production. Exploitation decoupled from this economic characterization becomes a transhistoric exploitation, as Cohen shows in his serf comparison. Class struggle and socialist revolution, which Wright surely hopes for and

that has motivated his research for decades, becomes a revolution aimed at overturning an experiential domination rather than structures that create those hierarchies in which exploitation/domination is experienced.

While economic structure is undersized in Wright, it is not so in Nicos Poulantzas' very theoretically dense and sophisticated work. Poulantzas depends upon the distinction between productive and unproductive labor in order to define a "new petty bourgeoisie" that combines with the older category in an ideological alliance with the bourgeoisie that counters the creation of proletarian class consciousness. According to Poulantzas, classes are "groupings of social agents, defined principally but not exclusively by their place in the production process" and that "social classes involve in one and the same process both class contradictions and class struggle" (14). Class position is also "independent of the will of the social agents" (14). The revolutionary class is comprised only by productive workers. Following Marx, he argues against Emmanuel and Gunder Frank that the "theory of the 'wage-earning class,'" which includes all wage earners as the proletarian, is too broad to be useful because it "includes in the working class all non-productive wage earners" (95).

Further, by relying on a mental/manual labor distinction, a new petty bourgeois class has grown along with the growth of informational-technical-mental labor. The result of this leaves the size of the working class in "developed" countries small and shrinking, and thus the prospect of class consciousness in those areas small and shrinking, as the embourgeoisement of the working class creates a ballooning of the middle classes. Additionally, Poulantzas jetisons as Lukácsian and Hegelian the categories of class-in-itself, "economic class situation, uniquely objective determination of class by the process of production," as well as class-for-itself, "class endowed with its own 'class consciousness' and an autonomous political organization = class struggle" (16). Overall, structure and emplacement in structure serve as guarantors for ideology and consciousness. The divorce between mental and manual labor within productive labor, however, is one that Marx had commented negatively on, as we will examine with Braverman.

Stephen Resnick and Richard Wolff deal with the productive and unproductive in a very different way. While Poulantzas defined the category of the "new petty bourgeoisie" through the distinction between mental and



manual labor along with productive and unproductive labor, Resnick and Wolff utilize subsumption to account for class position and class struggle. For them, "*Subsumed classes* refers to persons occupying a subsumed class position. Such a position occurs within (is a personification of) a subsumed class process" (118). Linking it with the language of unproductive labor, they state that "subsumed class process refers to the distribution of already appropriated surplus labor or its process" and that "subsumed class distributors and recipients of surplus value provide specific conditions of existence of the capitalist fundamental class process" (119). More directly, "They produce no commodity and no value. They are thus 'unproductive laborers'" (125). Those that occupy this intermediate layer are some figures that have been traditionally considered as members of the capitalist class: merchants, money lenders and landlords (124). While Poulantzas' distinction combines "up," displacing from the working class those that are more aligned with the bourgeoisie, Resnick and Wolff tend to flatten distinctions "down." This combining tends, in fact, to narrow the ability to distinguish between different levels of power within the subsumed class. Writing about sales, for

example, they state that "from the sales director down to the lowliest sales clerk with the least authority, all sales personnel obtain distributed shares of surplus value. Their paychecks all come from the same source: the capitalist's appropriated surplus value" (125). At the ultimate end of the chain of capitalist relations, capitalists themselves are combined as part of this class:

The capitalists not only appropriate surplus value, they also distribute it. Such distribution is required to secure the conditions of existence of appropriation, just as the appropriation is a condition of existence of the distribution. Thus, persons who occupy the fundamental class position of surplus value appropriator (capitalist) must also occupy the subsumed class position of surplus value distributor. (131)

In his definition of class, Erik Olin Wright attempted to expand the possibility for class struggle by multiplying the ways in which people occupying different social position interact and by creating a version of exploitation that relied on a definition of domination and exploitation that (purposefully) ignored the labor theory of value. Poulantzas developed a theory of class that resuscitates

and enlarges the concept of the labor aristocracy through the embourgeoisment of section of the mental\unproductive laborer. Wolff and Resnick, again at the upper end of the spectrum, developed a version of class that flattens petty bourgeois-bourgeois-capitalist positions. Harry Braverman works from precisely the opposite end of the social scale, developing a theory of class that demonstrates how the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois are becoming proletarianized.

Braverman rejects theories that purport to create "new working class" because the "newness" of that class works on two levels: "it refers to occupations that are new in the sense of having been recently created or enlarged, and also in the sense of their gloss, presumed advancement, and 'superiority' to the old" (26). At the end of the nineteenth century, argues Braverman, firms and factories grew immensely in size and scale. Along with this growth there developed a tendency to split up labor originally performed by a single worker into a number of specialized jobs. As with Poulantzas, while splitting up labor into mental and manual categories or dealing with experiential dimensions of domination and exploitation for a worker can be useful in examining the lack of class consciousness, organization and struggle, it tends to displace the fact

that the working class is exploited as a *class*. In his discussion of productive and unproductive labor in the first volume of *Capital*, Marx defines this in a way that is consonant with Braverman's discussion of scientific management through Taylorism:

Labour-power socially combined and the various competing labour-powers which together form the entire production machine participate in very different ways in the immediate process of making commodities . . . Some work better with their hands, other their heads, one as manager, engineer, technologist, etc., the other as overseer, the third as manual labor or even drudge. An ever increasing number of types of labour are included in the immediate concept of *productive labour*, and those who perform it are classed as *productive workers*, workers directly exploited by capital and *subordinated* to its process of production and expansion. (*Capital* 1040).

To not see that productive workers are exploited as a class is to see labor and exploitation under capitalism not as social relations but as individualized experience (as in Wright) in distinction from class. Under Taylorism, jobs have been broken into "fragments of fragments" (38). In

the process of this fragmentation, workers are deskilled as mental and manual functions are separated in order to generate greater productivity (113). He states that there is a "dissociation of the labor process from the skills of the worker" along with a division between "conception and execution" (113-14). As work is deskilled, as mental work is divorced from manual laborers, the knowledge of the production of commodities is monopolized in order for greater control (119). Those who work in shoe factories, for example, are not trained to become cobblers. This is a further expansion of the proletarian's alienation from his or her own labor and, thus, from their own humanity. "Hand and brain become not just separated, but divided and hostile, and the unity of hand and brain turns into its opposite, sometime less than human" (125). A concomitant decay in product appears alongside the degradation of laborers. Just as the worker is more and more replaceable, the commodities produced, especially those products available to those who are doing the production, are meant to be replaced. Braverman points to the use cycle of automobiles, furniture and even buildings (like mobile homes) as gauges of this.

Society is now a giant marketplace, and in this "period of monopoly capitalism, the first step in the creation of the universal market is the conquest of all goods production by the commodity form, the second step is the conquest of an increasing range of services and their conversion into commodities, and the third step is a 'product cycle' that invents new products and services, some of which become indispensable" (Braverman 281). Thus Braverman sees that gradual interpenetration of capitalism into all areas of social life that Marx had been a little too premature in predicting. The state, in this marketplace, does not retreat before capital, it is capital's protector as the "guarantor of the conditions, the social relations, of capitalism, and the protector of the ever more unequal distribution of property" (Braverman 284). Finally, Braverman expands the category of productive labor to include retail and clerical work as employed in capitalist firms under the same logic of the fragmentation of work. He states that "while unproductive labor has declined outside the grasp of capital, it has increased within its ambit" (415). This, then, places him in agreement with Laibman and Houston. Houston had argued for an expansion of the circuit of capital to include all

workers, a prospect that Marx rejects, but one that Braverman tends toward.

With this chapter, I am not trying to pose as a Marxy Marxist proving my credibility as a theorist through striking polemics and fealty to every utterance of Karl Marx. My interest in an examination of these theorists is to come to find exactly who is included in the category of the revolutionary subject following the labor theory of value, and in the next chapter I will examine Marxist theories of imperialism in order to come back, at the end of that chapter, to what has been discussed here. My hope is that, after looking at that element of Marxist thought, a more productive interpretation of class struggle in the aim of socialist transformation will be brought into view.

### **Chapter Three: *Imperial Theory***

According to Thomas Friedman, "people can talk about alternatives to the free market and global integration, they can demand alternatives, they can insist on a 'Third Way,' but for now none is apparent" (101). In Friedman's world, the neo-liberal model, free trade is that thing which guarantees the success of any political system. All economies need to disregard any alternatives to capitalism because capitalist development is the only game in town. Friedman writes "there is only one thing to say about those alternatives: *They didn't work*. And the people who rendered judgment were the people who lived under them" (101). To Friedman, there is only one thing that any economy can do: submit to what he calls the Golden Straitjacket. To do this, the polity of any country must be or be perceived as:

making the private sector the primary engine of economic growth, maintaining a low rate of inflation and price stability, shrinking the size of its bureaucracy, maintaining as close to a balance as possible, if not a surplus, eliminating and lowering tariffs on imported goods, removing restrictions on foreign investments, getting rid of quotas and



domestic monopolies, increasing exports, privatizing state-owned industries and utilities, deregulating capital markets, making its currency convertible, opening its industries and stock and bond markets to direct foreign ownership and investment, deregulating its economy to promote as much domestic competition as possible, opening its banking and telecommunications systems to private ownership and competition, and allowing its citizens to choose from an array of competing pension options and foreign-run pension and mutual funds. (103)

If your government follows Friedman's advice, which is a precise summary of the liberal market approach, "as your country puts on the Golden Straitjacket, two things happen: your economy grows and your politics shrink" (103).

This kind of reasoning is familiar to Marxist theorists. Prabhat Patnaik refers to this faith in a study of what he calls *bourgeois internationalism*, which he associates, in a very kind sense, with John Kenneth Galbraith. Galbraith sees the world as improving under and only under capitalism, which can serve as a solution to the problems of the world. Patnaik writes that "Galbraith has said that the internationalization of economic, social, and

political life has been one of the beneficent influences of the last 50 years. . . He laments that national sovereignty should protect internal disasters and internal conflicts and argues the need on grounds of humaneness for an international force, a sort of international policeman, that would prevent internal slaughter" (169). Galbraith is not feigning a belief, however. According to Patnaik, "I choose Galbraith because he is among the best in this genre of thinkers. The genuine humaneness behind his observations can scarcely be questioned" (169).

He has decided to quote Galbraith because Galbraith loyally represents the best hopes of the capitalist class. Patnaik states that he refers to "the advocacy of internationalism in a capitalist world, *bourgeois internationalism*" and that "this has to be distinguished from *proletarian internationalism*, which revolutionary socialists have always talked about" (169). In this genre, economic theorists celebrate capitalism and the modernization of those areas of the globe under imperial control because of the inherent progressiveness of capitalism. He writes that "the bourgeois internationalist holds that there is a progressive and humane international current in contrast to the backward and reactionary

domestic one; once a country opens up its doors to the former it would be on the path to development" (170). This belief veils the true nature of capitalism, with its constant need to expand in its desire for more and more accumulated profit across more and more of the globe. Patnaik writes that "capitalism from its very inception has been founded upon external conquest. It is unfortunate that in the main body of the work that Marx could complete in his lifetime, the *theoretical* analysis of capitalism was undertaken as if it constituted a closed system" (170-71).

This bourgeois internationalism is not something that is distinct from Marxism. For many Eurocentric Marxists, capitalism is something that is necessary for those countries outside of its gambit to go through before transitioning to socialism. Marx was ambiguous in his assessment of imperialism, but he never flinched from siding with the exploited nations over the exploiting nations. The struggle is between an assessment of what capitalism does as it changes social relations and interpenetrates aspects of life and the naturalization of these changes. This naturalization of the process, depicting capitalism as a crucible for socialism, makes exploitation an unavoidable fact in which the project of

imperialism is lost. Anthony Brewer, for example, asks "what, if anything, was new about European overseas empires? After all, empires have existed since before the beginning of written records—there have always been people, cities, or states that conquered and subjugated others" (66). His answer, later on, is that violence is unavoidable, capitalist nations are powerful, and the powerful get what they want. He states "imperialism was a byproduct of the emergence and development of capitalism in one part of what was then a fragmented world, and of the subsequent creation of a single world economy" and that "it was inevitable that unification of the world economy would lead to clashes between incompatible economic, legal, and social systems, and equally inevitable that they would be resolved in favor of the most powerful" (82).

In early stages of socialist thought on imperialism, nationalism and ethnic chauvinism impacted the interpretation of where socialist revolution would or could happen. Marx, for his part, offered a critique of capitalism within a European system. In a letter to Vera Zasulich he qualified the claims made in his work by stating that the "'historical inevitability' of this process is expressly limited to the *countries of Western*

*Europe*" (73). The process of exploitation under capitalism was universal, however. He states "at the core of the capitalist system, therefore, lies the complete separation of the producer from the means of production . . . the basis of this whole development is *the expropriation of the agricultural producer*. To date this has not been accomplished in a radical fashion anywhere except in England" (73). In other areas of his work, when he does talk about colonial holdings of the empire, he does so in a manner that examines transformations (good and bad) that capitalism makes, but there is never a question with whom his sympathies lie. In reference to British rule in India, Marx states "England has to fulfil a double mission in India: one destructive, the other regenerating" (90). He sees the unleashing of productivity as a regenerative process, but, at the same time, this unleashing includes an incredible barbarism that Marx takes aim at. In enumerating the many instances of horrendous brutality experienced under British occupation, Marx states that "the profound hypocrisy and inherent barbarism of bourgeois civilization lies unveiled before our eyes, turning from its home, where it assumes respectable forms, to the colonies where it goes naked" (95). While he never

completed a theory of imperialism or a theory of socialist revolution outside of Europe, Marx definitely believed it was a possibility. In an examination of imperialism in China, in particular the ways in which the British were forcing the Chinese to purchase opium and the Chinese resistance to it might "throw the spark into the overloaded mine of the present industrial system and cause the explosion of the long-prepared general crisis, which, spreading abroad, will be closely followed by political revolutions on the Continent" (87).

*Lenin's Imperialism, Highest Stage of Capitalism*, brings together the work of anti-imperialist thought from Marx through to World War I. In essence, Lenin argued that imperialism is the newest form of capitalism, and constitutes a specific stage. He states that "at a certain stage of its development concentration itself, as it were, leads straight to monopoly" (643). Several things follow that concentration: the "merging of bank capital with industrial capital," the "export of capital as distinguished from the export of commodities," the "formulation of international monopolist capitalist associations," and the "territorial division of the whole world" (710). This is parasitism, Lenin argues, where one

small class exploits and oppresses whole nations. Hilferding, a Marxist whom Lenin uses extensively, is critiqued for leaving out that fundamental moral claim. Hobson, who was not a Marxist, is complimented for emphasizing it. Lenin states that it is this quality that predicts the end of it as a system. He states that "the rentier state is a state of parasitic, decaying capitalism" (710). In referencing Hobson's discussion of China, Lenin states "imperialism, which means the partitioning of the world, and the exploitation of other countries besides China, which means high monopoly profits for a handful of rich countries. Makes it economically possible to bribe the upper strata of the proletariat, and thereby fosters, gives shape to, and strengthens opportunism" (712). In its beginning stages, monopoly unleashes "immense progress in the socialization of production" and "in particular, the process of technical invention and improvement" (649). In later stages, the system ossifies and innovation in technical and productive sectors disappears. At the same time, anti-imperialist struggle within the dominant nations is retarded by the formation of a labor aristocracy. Lenin states that "imperialism has the tendency to create privileged sections also among the workers, and to detach

them from the broad masses of the proletariat" (714). The imperial commercial forces rely on domestic support in order to ensure state guarantees, contracts, and the utilization of state sanctioned violence in its name. Even those within dominant countries that are against direct oppression of other groups through state violence are sometimes unable to associate this oppression with the market. Lenin critiques U.S. anti-imperialists for doing just that in their opposition of U.S. involvement in the Phillipines and in Cuba (717). Lenin takes aim at Kautsky and Kautskyism throughout the work, arguing that this "international ideological trend represented in all countries of the world by the 'most prominent theoreticians,' the leaders of the Second International."

During World War I, the Second International was wrenched apart as representatives from warring nations sided with their own nations in the struggle. The national question became an issue for those communists that opposed the war, like Lenin and Luxemburg, but for those communists that supported the war, a new interpretation of the road to socialism emerged. Karl Kautsky, who had long been seen as *the* Marxist of his generation, came up with a theory of ultra-imperialism, arguing that as capitalist imperialism



integrated nations across the globe there would be, eventually, a peaceful transition. In the 1915 introduction to Bukharin's *Imperialism and World Economy*, Lenin concisely critiques Kautsky's position. He states that "reasoning theoretically and in the abstract, one may arrive at the conclusion reached by Kautsky . . . that the time is not far off when those magnates of capital will unite into one world trust which would replace the rivalries and the struggle of nationally limited finance capital by internationally united finance capital" (11). This is a problem that, to Lenin, often impacts those that see answers to the transition to socialism through economic analysis. Lenin states that these "Economists" of the late nineteenth century "at times became apologetic (worshipping capital, making peace agreements with it, praising it instead of financing it); at times became non-political (*i.e.* rejected politics, or the importance of politics, denied the probability of general political convulsions, etc., this being the favourite error of the 'Economists')" (11). This defers political action not just in terms of international class consciousness, but also as a living philosophy of struggle in the here and now. Lenin states that previously Kautsky had promised revolutionary change

but today "Kautsky again only promises to be a Marxist in the coming epoch of ultra-nationalism" and that "for tomorrow we have Marxism on credit, Marxism as a promise, Marxism deferred" (13). An inability to support resistance in the colonized world is at the center of this position. If capitalism needs to advance seamlessly across the world, then resistance to its advance should not be supported. For Lenin, these nationalist Marxists challenge capitalism only at home and only in theory. They "sympathize with internationalism in the enemy's camp, anywhere but not at home, not among their allies" and they "sympathize with the 'self-determination of nations' but not of those that are dependent upon the nation honoured by the membership of the sympathizer" (13). For Kautsky, the theory of ultraimperialism was not just an opportunistic justification for nationalism. This was an outgrowth of a direction in Kautsky's thought that can be seen *The Materialist Conception of History*, for example. Here, Kautsky states "even if we assume, as the great majority of ethnologists does today, that mankind is descended from only a single species, it nevertheless can easily be assumed the different races into which the species split developed their cognitive faculty, their intelligence, in

different ways" (127). He qualifies this by stating that the term peoples should be used rather than races, but it is "self-evident" that some nations have more "knowledge" than others in their interaction with their environments through labor. Over time, with civilization, that knowledge can be passed from the "civilized people" to the "primitive peoples." Thus, even Marxism has a civilizing mission for Kautsky, and the apex of history just happened to be in his own backyard (127-130).

Lenin also critiqued those that opposed national movements, asserting that rejecting self-determination ends up supporting the same kind of bourgeois chauvinism that Kautsky did. His differences with Luxemburg in this are very important. Luxemburg argued against self-determination for Poland in support of a general, international class alliance. In "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination" Lenin argues that the "Russian Marxists' Programm, which deals with the right of nations to self-determination, has . . . given rise lately to a crusade on the part of the opportunists." None of these crusaders, however "has offered a single argument of their own; they all merely repeat what Rosa Luxemburg said in her lengthy Polish article of 1908-09" (567). In order to

organize as a class, the proletariat needs to do so within some context in which they can come to political and economic power. To eschew state power is not an option. Lenin states that "for the complete victory of commodity production, the bourgeoisie must capture the home market, and there must be politically united territories whose population speak a single language" (568). Lenin here crucially distinguishes two phases that he believes are necessary for socialist transformation in actually existing terms. The first is the "period of the formation of the bourgeois-democratic society and the state, when the national movements for the first time become mass movements and in one way or another draw *all* classes of the population into politics." The second is the "period of fully formed capitalist states with a long-established constitutional regime and a highly developed antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie—a period that may be called the eve of capitalism's downfall" (572). Lenin points out that this process is the same in the so-called advanced as it is in the colonized because "self-determination of nations means the political separation of these nations from alien national bodies, and the formation of an independent national state" (569). In every country,

during the first phase, "the bourgeoisie, which naturally assumes the leadership at the start of every nation movement, says that support for all national aspirations is practical" (578). This bourgeois nationalism must be countered by a working class that is conscious of its existence and needs as a class. Lenin states that "the important thing for the proletariat is to ensure the development of its class. For the bourgeoisie it is important to hamper this development by pushing the aims of its 'own' nation before those of the proletariat" (580). Lenin also states that he and the Russian party will support any bourgeois party in any colonized country that is struggling against colonialism, a struggle that Lenin feels will inherently inculcate the development of class consciousness among non-bourgeois groups. He states that "*Insofar as the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation fights the oppressor, we are always, in every case, and more strongly than anyone else, in favor, for we are the staunchest and most consistent enemies of oppression*" and that "bourgeois nationalism of any oppressed nation has a general democratic content that is directed *against* oppression, and it is this content that we *unconditionally* support" (581).

Luxemburg had actually constructed a theory of imperialism that, because she never came to a position of power like a Lenin or a Bukharin, never received the kind of application in a party program that it merited. She argues, unique to her, that capitalism depends upon the existence of non-capitalist areas of the globe for its continued survival. The Russian "legalist" school attempted to determine the ways in which transition to capitalism and from capitalism can take place, and ended up arguing a strong case that capitalism could overcome internal contradictions and continue growth ad infinitum. Luxemburg argued against that tradition, stating that "if the capitalist mode of production can ensure boundless expansion of the productive forces, of economic progress, it is invincible indeed" (302). The capitalist mode is bounded because at the very least it will run out of areas across the world to integrate into its orbit. She breaks up the struggle into three phases: "the struggle of capital against natural economy, and the struggle against commodity production, and the competitive struggle of capital on the international stage for the remaining conditions of accumulation." The primary target of capitalism, she feels, is the natural or peasant economy. She states that

the "existence and development of capitalism requires an environment of non-capitalist forms of production, but not one of these forms will serve its ends. Capitalism needs non-capitalist social strata as a market for its surplus value, as a source of supply for its means of production and as a reservoir of labor power for its wage system" (349). Ultimately, Luxemburg places the most exploited groups at the center of world history from the point of view of a socialist. In her schema, the downfall of capitalism is registered in economic terms. Eventually capitalism will fall beneath the weight of its own success. It is precisely the opposite of Kautsky's, however. Capitalist ultra-imperialism is not peaceful, it is violent and ugly. Additionally, this critique from a European Marxist was the first to raise the possibility that those that are exploited the most, those that live in the colonies might prove to be that community that in resisting imperialism, might bring capitalism to an end.

At the founding of the Third International, the Comintern, the conflict between different interpretations of nationalism and imperialism were central in the debate about what would be included in the "National and Colonial Question." The Third International represented a challenge

to Eurocentric capitalism in its inception. Pak Chin-sun, an émigré to Russia from Korea who participated in the International, wrote that "the First and Second Internationals were associations that actually included the masses only of Europe and America" (859). Theorists at the first two Internationals were also silent on the question of oppressed peoples around the globe, preferring to justify expansion of Western hegemony in cultural terms rather than challenge the impacts of that hegemony on other cultures. Pak writes "Whenever they took up the 'Eastern Question,' the official leaders of the Second International trembled just as much as did the bourgeois politicians, with their constant sham devotion to 'democracy,' civilization, and culture" (859). In concluding his contribution, Pak makes a significant change to Marx's famous phrase in the communist manifesto—expanding its breadth from Europe to the entire globe, "Today the specter of social revolution haunts the whole world" (859).

At the Third International, however, Lenin and M. N. Roy, a Bengali Marxist, disagreed on what the International's official position on revolution in the less developed regions should be. Roy believed that bourgeois nationalism was a dead end, and that revolutionary



socialist nationalism should be supported completely (Young 131). Lenin was able to accept the possibility of revolution that "lept" from one stage to another. In the founding document, Lenin wrote "We shall hardly be wrong if we say that it is this contradiction between the backwardness of Russia and the 'leap' she made over bourgeois democracy to the highest form of democracy" and that "it is this contradiction that has been one of the reasons . . . why people in the West have had particular difficulty or have been slow in understanding the role of the soviets" (33). Lenin, despite acknowledging it as a possibility, was unable to commit to the exclusive support of this "leaping" for colonized nations.

The final document on the national and colonial question was written by Roy. Lenin made substantial corrections and substitutions to the content. John Riddell, in the second volume to *Workers of the World and Oppressed Peoples Unite*, prints the draft version along with the editing. The changes are significant (Abdel-Malek covers portions of this in *Social Dialectics: Nation & Revolution* 83). "The fountainhead from which European capitalism draws its main strength is no longer to be found in Europe but in the colonial possessions and dependencies"

was changed to read "one of the main sources from which European capitalism draws its strength is to be found in the colonial possessions and dependencies" (847). "Without the breaking up of the colonial empire, the overthrow of the capitalist system in Europe does not appear possible" was edited to be "the breakup of the colonial empire, together with the proletarian revolution in the home country, will overthrow the capitalist system in Europe" (848). Roy wrote

For the overthrow of foreign imperialism, the first step towards revolution in the colonies, the cooperation of the bourgeois-nationalist elements may be useful. But the Communist International must not find in them the media through which the revolutionary movement in the colonies should be helped. The mass movements in the colonies are growing independently of the nationalist movements. The masses distrust the political leaders who always lead them astray and prevent them from revolutionary action.

Lenin replaced "imperialism" with "capitalism" and corrected everything from "may be useful" to read

is useful. But the foremost and necessary task is the formation of Communist parties that will organize the

peasants and workers and lead them to the revolution and the establishment of soviet republics. Thus the masses of the backward countries may reach communism not through capitalist development but led by the class-conscious proletariat of the advanced countries. (852).

Roy wrote "The supposition that owing to the economic and industrial backwardness, the peoples in the colonies are bound to go through the stage of bourgeois democracy is wrong. The events and conditions in many of the colonies do not corroborate such a supposition." Lenin struck that out. Additionally, Lenin struck out the last two of the eleven theses that Roy had written for the document. Ten read:

The bourgeois national democrats in the colonies strive for the establishment of a free national state, whereas the masses of workers and poor peasants are revolting, even though in many cases unconsciously, against the system which permits such brutal exploitation. Consequently, in the colonies, we have two contradictory forces; they cannot develop together. To support the colonial bourgeois democratic movements would amount to helping the

growth of the national spirit which will surely obstruct the awakening of class consciousness in the masses; whereas to encourage and support the revolutionary mass action through the medium of a Communist party of the proletarians will bring the real revolutionary forces to action which will not only overthrow the foreign imperialism, but lead progressively to the development of soviet power, thus preventing the rise of a native capitalism in place of the vanquished foreign capitalism, to further oppress and exploit the people. (854-855)

The eleventh read: "To initiate at as early a stage as possible the class struggle in the colonies means to awaken the people to the danger of a transplanted European capitalism which, overthrown in Europe, may seek refuge in Asia, and to defeat such an eventuality before its beginning" (855).

Following the Third International, however, all of the socialist revolutions of note took place in the colonial territories, as Eric Wolf noted in the *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century*. The centrality of Euro-centric Marxist thought as a political force was waning as national liberation movements grew, but its dominance in political

theory in the west never did. Additionally, the theorists of socialist national liberation movements did not gain influence in the west until popularized by western scholars and, even then, it was depicted as not Marxist enough. Anouar Abdel-Malek discusses this in what Robert Young has described as a "contribution has never been surpassed at the level of its theoretical discussion and analysis" (170).

According to Abdel-Malek, in reference to versions of nationalism emerging from socialists of the colonized nations, Roy represented the far left at that international, while Sultan-Galiev and Tan Malakka occupied the center and the right, respectively. Malakka argued for a Pan-Islamic movement uniting all of the Islamic world against capitalism, while Sultan-Galiev argued, similarly to Stalin, in the right of nationalities to self-determination (83). According to Abdel-Malek "ultimately, Stalin speaks the same language—but he speaks it in the name of his own nation, while others speak in the name of a coming revolution in other nations" (87). Lenin, who in Abdel-Malek's mind was struggling with this question, passed away a scant few years after the founding of the international. Shortly thereafter, however, Zinoviev and

Stalin would consolidate the power of the Comintern to dictate acceptable paths to socialism for those countries that expected funding and support.

In 1927, Mao was dismissed from his position in the Communist Party of China for writing a report that would soon typify the approach many socialist organizers would take in the colonized nations. In his *Report on An Investigation of the peasant Movement in Hunan*, he had made the amazing suggestion that the peasantry might, in and of itself, be a revolutionary class. To many Marxists, an alliance between proletarian and peasant was barely Marxist. Lenin had been critiqued for his unapologetic support of the alliance under Russian conditions, but as the corrections made in Roy's submission to Comintern show, it was a relationship in which the proletarian were the true revolutionary subjects.

At the same time that Mao was being reprimanded for his deviance, José Carlos Mariátegui was writing his *Seven Essays on Peruvian Reality*, which would be published in 1928. In these essays, Mariátegui comes to the same conclusion, championing the rights of the indigenous Peruvians to bypass bourgeois-democracy, especially if it meant increasing the influence of capitalism that had

failed to take root in the entirety of the country. He states that "the moral, political, and psychological elements of capitalism apparently have not found a favorable climate here" (21). Additionally, quoting an article of his own he had written years previously, "there does not exist in Peru a progressive bourgeoisie, endowed with national feelings, that claims to be a liberal and democratic and that derives its policy from the postulates of its doctrine" (30). He argues for an immediate transition to socialism with Peruvian characteristics.

This transition he finds in places like Ché's *Manifesto* where an "important formulation [there] is 'we, the exploited of the world'—not 'we communists of the Three Continents.' We who are, and can be globally considered to be, the proletariat of the underdeveloped countries of the West" (86). Marxists of Europe "regard this as alien to Marxism; in fact, it is a question of a different history, different in a temporary sense though not in the long historical term" (94). Ho Chih Minh, appearing at the Fifth Congress of the Comintern had said nearly the same thing, asserting that, in Abdel-Malek's summary, "we exist; and you will never be able to avoid the fact until you have

considered our problems; if you do not, we shall follow our own road" (86).

Following World War II, the war ended for the west, but not for the colonial peoples, who continued to struggle. The "war continued everywhere. It is in progress today in Vietnam, as it was a few years ago in Korea" (91). The world peace that many on the left were calling for had no context for the peoples of these nations. He writes "At peace, with whom? At peace, to what extent? At peace, to what 'end'? Imperialist hegemony has hardened progressively in a climate of generalised violence from one end of the world to the other" (91).

The Chinese Communist Party's victory following WWII had an enormous impact on national liberation movements. He writes that "during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, no tricontinental country has enjoyed a homogenous capitalist economy like that of Europe" (95). Mao's ascendancy "moved Marxists to look for something other than a Marxism based on 'class against class' or the 'national front'" (90). A socialist revolution that resulted in national liberation had taken place in a country where, as theorists would have it, it should not



have. Western Marxists tended to follow "the direction of classical, institutional Marxism . . . which follows the thesis of the Comintern that 'the European revolution carries the world with it'" (90). To these Marxists, Maoism is a deviancy, a faux Marxism that is too voluntaristic and "unscientific." Abdel-Malek, noting that Maoism has been responsible for good and bad, states that, for him, the rupture with this aspect Eurocentric Marxism was significant. He writes "I do not believe that the revolution must necessarily pass through the Western framework of production, though it will have to endure other purgatories and other infernos, as Vietnam has shown" (106).

In the west, with the popularity of World Systems theory, many do not know the debt that these theorists, as they have repeatedly stated, owe to the theorists that Abdel-Malek describes as ascendant after WWII. Amilcar Cabral, for example, notes that the class struggle is important, but with some reservations. Cabral states that "the motive force of history is the class struggle" and that those that believe this "would certainly agree to re-examining this assertion to make it more precise and give it wider application" (123). In his explanation of the

prospects for socialism in his country, however, he states that "the first stage would correspond to the communal agricultural and cattle raising society," "the second would correspond to agrarian societies" and "the third stage would correspond to socialist and communist" where "the State tends progressively to disappear or actually disappears" (125-26). The transition through bourgeois nationalism does not appear. Additionally, the necessity of any capitalist development or the dependence on a traditional proletariat is gone.

Fanon challenges intellectuals, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie as central in a socialist revolution—often, in fact, they detract from it. He states that unlike these classes, "the people, on the other hand, take their stand from the start on the broad and inclusive positions of *bread and the land*: how can we obtain the land, and bread to eat?" (50). Additionally, and controversially, he has placed this class at the center of revolution as Mao had. He writes that "the peasantry is systematically disregarded for the most part by the propaganda put out by the nationalist parties. And it is clear that in the colonial countries the peasants alone are revolutionary" (61).

Leopold Senghor argued that "the social problem today is less a class struggle within a nation than a global struggle between the 'have' nations (including the Soviet Union) and the proletarian nations (including the Chinese People's Republic), and we are one of these 'have-not' nations" (133). He unflinchingly challenges class theory, stating that "'class struggle' is much more complex than Marx thought. In fact, the working class is not a simple reality. Moreover, it is diminishing, while the several categories of salaried workers with dissimilar interests are increasing" because "the peasants, whom Marx considered more or less impervious to revolutionary ferment and dedicated 'to the stupidity of rural life,' have, in underdeveloped countries, belied this judgment" (32).

Nkrumah wrote a core World System's text, examining underdevelopment as an extension of Lenin's argument in *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*. According to Nkrumah, "The result of neo-colonialism is that foreign capital is used for the exploitation rather than for the development of the less developed parts of the world" (x). Essentially, with the dominance of finance capital, exorbitant foreign direct investment or loans will continue to subjugate a nation that has formal independence. It

will continue, under economic force with military threat hanging over its head, to be in a colonial relationship with the core countries. In this colonial relationship, the development of the colonized country is the excuse for investment, but profit through superexploitation is the reality. He states that "conflict between the rich and the poor in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, which was fought out between the rich and the poor in the developed nations of the world ended in a compromise" in which "developed countries succeeded in exporting their internal problem and transferring the conflict between rich and poor from the international to the international stage" (255). He notes the benevolent rhetoric again, quoting Truman who said that "the only kind of war we seek is the good old war against man's ancient enemies . . . poverty, disease, hunger and illiteracy'" and that "however little other types of war have been sought, they are the ones who have been waged" (256).

Wallerstein, the figure most often given credit for the establishment of the field, has written about this at length. Wallerstein argues that, for him, world systems analysis is a challenge to the reign of "objective"

nineteenth century social science that operates within the writings of those in the first world who pretend to explain the world objectively while believing they are apolitical. Wallerstein states that "in wearing the blinkers which the nineteenth century constructed, we are unable to perform the social task we wish to perform and that the rest of the world wishes us to perform, which is to present rationally the real historical alternatives that lie before us.

World-systems analysis was born as a moral, and in its broadest sense, political, protest" (*Essential Wallerstein* 129). Wallerstein provides an example of this blinkering in his discussion of the position of Africa in the capitalist system. Several Africanists in the first world had created histories of colonialism that refused to acknowledge the relevance of national liberation movements because they were unable to place modern national liberation movements in a larger, politicized context that does not accept the borders set by imperialists as definitive borders between peoples, and that the period of colonization is not the only portion of history that impacts the future of African peoples. When African critics like Walter Rodney and Bernard Magubane said that this was Eurocentric, they were in turn attacked for shoddy

scholarship in criticizing the people who produced the scholarship as inheritors of privilege, a privilege Magubane felt was manifested through their scholarship. For Wallerstein, this means giving up the stance of political neutrality and giving up objective, amorphous narrative personas. Scholars must, "bring to the fore our implicit theories. And this means specifying the time-scope and space-scope and justifying our choices" (*Essential Wallerstein* 52).

While the Eurocentrism of academics writing about the third world is an important instance of blinkered thought, those scholars that developed the theoretical basis of world-systems analysis were, in essence, arguing against a larger field of economic thought that had naturalized European superiority. In "World Systems Theory," Daniel Chirot and Thomas Hall explain that Modernization Theory, as exemplified in the work of Talcott Parsons and W. W. Rostow, was what world-systems analysis worked against. Parsons and Rostow extended the ways in which countries like England were able to reach "modernity" to include a path of progress that must necessarily be repeated in order for the third world to reach the level of material comfort enjoyed, in their opinion, by the entire West. In making

this development universal, Rostow, for example, was able to define specific stages that operated as transhistorical periods of development that must be reached in order to move on to another more advanced level.

Against this depiction of progress, other economic and social theorists argued that the progress of those apex nation-states depended upon the under-development of other areas of the globe. Significantly, Chirot and Hall trace this history back to the 1930s, when the Argentinean economist Raúl Prebisch began looking at the dependence of the first world on the super-exploitation of regions in the third, "underdeveloped" world (World-System Theory 90). As a part of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America, Prebisch focused primarily on Latin America. A. G. Frank, the inheritor of this tradition did the same.

With *Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution* (1969), A. G. Frank argued that the development of the so-called advanced countries depended upon the subordination of the rest of the world. While Chirot and Hall argue that his theoretical contribution is the most "polemical and simplistic" version of development theory, Frank eventually extended his conception of underdevelopment to include a schematic description of capitalism over history (83). By

1978, Frank was arguing that dependence and underdevelopment are part of the logic of existing capitalism. In *World Accumulation 1492-1789*, Frank tracks the development of dependency and concomitant underdevelopment. In *Dependent Accumulation and Underdevelopment*, Frank extends his argument to include the current era, and sets up his argument by wondering "what initiates and accounts for the original differences in wage levels between the metropolis plus its overseas settlements and the bulk of the colonial countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America?" (12). In this work, Frank attempts to move the theory of underdevelopment into a more globally, holistically engaged body of thought—a body of thought that had developed around the adaptation of world-systems analysis popularized in the sociology department at SUNY, Binghamton, where Terrence Hopkins, an important theorist in his own right, was serving as chair.

In 1976, several scholars, including Wallerstein, started work at the Braudel Center in Binghamton. According to Goldfrank, it was at Binghamton under Wallerstein's influence that "world-systems perspective was ingeniously constructed by marrying to a sensibility informed by 'Third World' radicalism three major traditions



in Western social science, all of them annunciated in opposition to the dominant strain of Anglo-American liberalism and positivism. These traditions were German historical economy, the Annales school in French historiography, and Marxism" (160).

While the Braudel School was indeed influential, it should be noted that Americans do not and never did hold a copyright on the development of world-systems analysis. Fernand Braudel, after whom the Braudel School is named, provided a great impetus in constructing the periodization that many Americans have followed. Written a few years after Wallerstein's move to Binghamton, the three volume *Civilization and Capitalism* are summative contributions of Braudel's life work and definitive statements of the Annales school. In *The Structures of Everyday Life*, Braudel examines capitalism between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries by looking at the structure of "everyday life," and in so doing is a study of everything "from food to furniture, from techniques to towns" that "inevitably defines what material life is and has been" (559). The second volume, *The Wheels of Commerce*, moves from the everyday experience of material life to the specific economic conditions that define what capitalism as

a world-view and world-system. In this volume, Braudel looks at the system from the "lowest" to the "highest" levels—from town markets to money exchanges. Additionally, he attempts to create a comparative approach by looking at those areas that would be yoked to European capitalist expansion as well as those areas that tried to remain independent of it. At the same time, however, Braudel comes to the conclusion that capitalism "was able to develop only out of certain economic and social conditions which either prepared or facilitated its growth" (600). And for Braudel, that places Europe in a special position.

Unfortunately, world-systems analysis, despite its aim in creating a revolutionary world movement to revise and upset currently reigning capitalism, still manages to be configured itself in Eurocentric and US-centric ways. While the Binghamton Braudel Center is indeed important, the focus on the dominant powers within capitalism can have a tendency to create an intellectual climate in which the core talks to the core about the core—ever making the periphery more peripheral. While Wallerstein has attempted to counter that in several essays, most notably in his championing of third world liberation movements and theorists, institutional history seems comfortable in

placing the actual work done outside of the core outside of institutional memory. Samir Amin, the Egyptian Maoist and world-systems analyst, was working on a parallel line of theorizing before Wallerstein moved to Binghamton. His *Accumulation on a World Scale* (1970) in many ways foreshadows the transformation of dependency theory into world-systems analysis often credited to Wallerstein. Additionally, as the head of the Third World Forum, Amin's connection to academia has not been the same as those folks in Binghamton—Amin has continuously and consciously remained politically and not just academically active.

Janet Abu-Lughod has attempted to correct some of assumptions that lie behind examining the capitalist period alone, which tends to recenter the center. In her work, she examines the era prior to the traditional date given to the rise of capitalism. In *Before European Hegemony*, she demonstrates that there were indeed prior world systems. She states, after having read Wallerstein, that his volumes “tended to treat the European-dominated world system that formed in the long sixteenth century as though it appeared de novo” (x). Her work is an attempt to demonstrate, as has been done within the studies that are limited to Europe, that each successive era is an outgrowth of a

previous one, and that the European system depended on Middle Eastern and Far Eastern trade routes as material preconditions for Europe coming into being.

Samir Amin, the criticism offered by Abu-Lughod is linked with a fundamental problem in imagining social change overall.

In *Eurocentrism*, published the same year as *Before European Hegemony*, Amin provides a schematic history of precapitalist modes of production in the "Ancient" and "Medieval" world. In Amin's conception, the formative precapitalist mode was represented by what he terms "tributary cultures." In these cultural systems, superstructural elements dominate, and economic production and redistribution are transparent. Amin states that "the transparency of the relationships of exploitation in these societies demands that the ideological play a dominant role and be regarded as sacred" (22). In this conception, certain regions were more successful at configuring an ideology that could effectively justify this cultural stage, and Amin calls the more successful "centers" and the less successful "peripheral."

While Eurocentrism as an ideology developed, in Amin's description, in more recent times, his decision to begin

his study with the Ancient world is done in the hope of breaking apart the teleological conception of European development that still seems to dominate both history and social theory. In examining tributary culture, he demonstrates that the often assumed linear development of European identity as descended from Greece is actually a misconception that marginalizes the contributions made by regions outside of the "West" as it rips apart the relationship that the "East" had in the development of those ideologies that Europeans would consider their own. Greece, for example, is shown to be indebted and not distinct from the cultural formations of the East and of North Africa, and the common placement of the fall of the Roman empire as the dividing point between the Ancient and Medieval world is shown to be a Eurocentric revision in itself. The fall of Rome, Amin states, did not mean so much for the East, and by concentrating on its importance in the West, the position and importance of the contributions outside of the Mediterranean are devalued by its placement in a position of primacy over what he feels is a more important development, Hellenism in the wake of Alexander's empire. Hellenism is more important in this context because "it brings to a definitive end the

relative isolation of its difference peoples and opens up the prospect for their possible subsequent unification." The Roman empire, on the other hand, contributed little other than the moving of culture back from the center toward the periphery, that area that would be considered modern Europe. The Renaissance, for Amin, provides the genesis of capitalism, and its success transformed the periphery into the centers of this new order. The growth of material domination enabled the concomitant growth of Eurocentrism itself. Amin argues that, with the Renaissance, Europeans did not set out to "build capitalism," but "attributed their superiority to other things: to their 'Europeanness,' their Christian faith, or their rediscovered Greek ancestry—which is not by chance rediscovered at this point" (75). At the heart of Europe's success is conquest, and it is a conquest that develops increasing contradictions between central states and those that find themselves on its margins. The Enlightenment represented the flowering of a "bourgeois materialism" in the guise of universalism that "posits chains of causal determinations" that provide further justification for exploitation that work to naturalize oppression based on racial superiority and innate qualities.

Following the Enlightenment, capitalism itself becomes the justification for dominance. Social theorists argue that Europe is special because capitalism "could not have been born elsewhere" (105). Besides providing the self-proclaimed position as the only possible bed for capitalisms growth, the methods of development that provide a description of Europe's history turn into proscription for growth for cultures on the periphery. Amin argues that "the prevailing capitalist ideology thinks that this view restores the earlier universalist aspirations of Christianity" (105, 106).

Importantly, Amin does not let the contemporary, progressive Europeans and Americans off the hook. Just as capitalists see Europe as the natural apex of human development, some left leaning folks might be unable to move beyond a Eurocentric framework that still serves the same justification. Some Marxists, for example, retreat into economism and refer to the "two roads" to socialism— one for Europe and one for the periphery that awaits the revolution of first world proletarians. Still others retreat into over-simplified depictions of progress, like Stalin's five stage theory, that necessitates further exploitation of the South by the North in order for the

South to develop enough to provide preconditions for revolution. Amin points out that each Western configuration from the capitalist to the Eurocommunist neglects to understand that the periphery may indeed provide the context for revolutionary change—that it might lead the way, rather than follow these models. It might be time for Europeans to really come to terms with the legacy of imperialism and the possibility that, just as the centers of the tributary cultures were overcommitted to a specific justificatory regime, the peripheral societies that feel the contradictions more distinctly might then have the “flexibility” to offer challenges to the system they are yoked to. Regions of the third world could become the centers of the next stage.

With its trenchant critique of Eurocentrism and its description of how much support exists, invisible to most within the center, *Eurocentrism* might seem to be a rather negative book. But it is not. Amin spends much of the latter portion of the work attempting not just to break apart Eurocentrism as an oppressive ideology that justifies continued exploitation, he also attempts to divorce this ideology from its fictitious claim to universality—a claim that is simply a call to transplant the West wherever



markets are open enough for the moving—as he attempts to recuperate a version of universalism that could provide a way out. In the end, it is only through returning to Marxism and to socialism that Amin feels a new generation of theorists can find the answer. And even there, Amin worries about the possibility that the West's commitment to textual fetishism could continue to turn Marxism from a living tradition that allows for revision and reassessment of "actually existing capitalism" into a dead project where one searches for answers contained in a few sacred texts without understanding the history of their production, their boundedness in that history, and the possibilities of different and, perhaps, more effective answers. "The future is still open," Amin writes at the end of the book. "It is still to be lived" (152). Having come to this point, the danger is a kind of chauvinism that allows those in the West off of the hook completely. As a citizen of a core state, I can now sit back and wait. Deferring my Marxism until tomorrow as Lenin criticized Kautsky for having done. Or I could stick firm with classical Marxism and rail against lived experience—that those that do not follow Marx's core principles as discerned by the best scholarly minds, and excommunicate them from Marxism and

tell my self that the proletariat in the core will always be the vanguard.

In the last chapter we looked at productive and unproductive labor and several varieties of class theory. None of the lived experience of socialist revolution after World War II has any space in that literature—none but Poulantzas deals with imperialism at any length, for example. All of the theorists, however, look at productive and unproductive labor within a single nation. Mohun, for example, uses the latest figures on U.S. GDP to see the impact of unproductive labor on declining rates of profit. For imperialist capitalism, how does that GDP get disentangled from the GDP of other nations? Does productive labor there for U.S. companies add to U.S. profits? In the classic unproductive sector of welfare services, the ability to have welfare is predicated on superprofits taken from abroad. Finally, a perfect representation of the labor market, a complete set of calculations that shows everything transparently, will let us understand what the labor market looks like, but its function beyond that is negligible.

The working class is exploited as a class, and that exploitation is a social process. Those studies privilege

western industrial workers who are themselves losing their jobs and take as their central focus the construction of class in the West. By looking at the international working class as a class, which Marxists have always argued they do, means that the snapshot provided by these studies need to be expanded to include a representation of process as well. Capitalism expands risk for the class, and experiences within global capitalism need to include categories for the asymmetry of risk between core and periphery and within core and periphery.

Marx described, near the end of capital, the army of surplus labor or industrial reserve army, an under used category that is useful in this area. He states that "relative surplus population exists in all kinds of forms. Every worker belongs to it during the time when he is only partially or wholly unemployed" (794). If we count when the worker is unemployed, he or she is unproductive and dependent upon unproductive laborers for his or her livelihood. Marx refers directly to imperialism here, arguing that "some of these workers emigrate; in fact they are merely following capital, which has emigrated" (794). Marx includes other categories as well, as some live their lives semi-employed. As agricultural industry advances

"start of the agricultural population is therefore constantly on the point of passing over into an urban or manufacturing proletariat" (796). Additionally, the "consumption of labor-power by capital is so rapid that the worker has already lived himself out when he is only half-way through his life" and then falls into the Malthusian category of "surplus population" or becomes a pauper, the "lowest sediment of the relative surplus population." This is all integrated into his theory of capitalist accumulation, too. He states "the relative mass of the industrial reserve army thus increases with the potential energy of wealth," and, in a concise definition of underdevelopment, he states that "the more extensive, finally, the pauperized sections of the working class and the industrial reserve army, the greater is official pauperism. *This is the absolute general law of capitalist accumulation*" (798).

Spread as a global category, the industrial reserve army includes all of the non-capitalist and semi-proletarian peoples of the periphery that capitalism, even in the classic imperial texts like Lenin and Luxemburg, is attempting to break apart and integrate. Global divisions in wages impacts the global value of labor power. The

“outsourcing” of skilled jobs is a managerial technology that increases the relative surplus value gained from that labor (increased productivity at a lower cost in wages). Additionally, barriers to increasing absolute surplus value (forcing employees to work harder or longer) are disappearing as companies can move jobs overseas to areas that are not unionized. Finally, as we will see in the next chapter, the benefits accruing to proletarians in the core economies are ablativ under bourgeois nationalism. Those gains made by laborers in earlier eras can only be maintained through constant pressure from the working class conscious as a class.

## **Chapter Four: *Poor Solutions***

On August 22, 1996, the meager national welfare safety net that had existed in the United States was dismantled when then President William Clinton signed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act [PRWORA] into law. The most vulnerable and invisible among the nation's population became guinea pigs in an intrusive and demeaning social experiment that found poverty's only solution in the construction of coercive measures designed to do away with what legislators finally determined was the cause of poverty in this country: the immorality of the impoverished. In the discussion that ended by authorizing this definition of poverty and the poor, conservative theorists were able to set the ground rules for the debate by relying on the unchallenged centrality of individualism that found its expression even in the "personalization" of the responsibility in the title of the act itself. In focusing on how the problem of poverty inheres within the bodies of the poor, this language legitimizes a system of unequal access to basic necessities of housing, education, healthcare and a living wage. Additionally, as the rhetoric used by contemporary theorists exemplifies, the focus on individual sickness is mirrored by a redemption of

individual health—the health that exists within the bodies of white, Christian, married middle and working class American citizens. They, according to the anti-welfare warriors, are true inheritors and subjects of the historical legacy of this most "healthy" nation. By examining the history of welfare agendas in their three incarnations in the New Deal, the Great Society, and the contemporary era, a larger project, of which welfare reform is just one very painful instance, can be discerned: the right's domination of the United States. The truth of that statement is so evident that it feels ludicrous even writing it on the page. But, without listening to the theorists of the popular right, by simply dismissing their writings as simplistic, inane or insane, the only folks that are able to remain comfortable by this dismissal are those who do not have to worry as much about their economic livelihood and who tend to not suffer under policies legitimized by it.

Along side of the victory of the right exists the absolute failure of the left to effectively rally public support for those issues that those on the political left believe should be obvious to all. Even if the justification offered by the public intellectuals of the

right can be laughed away, the kind of support that they receive cannot. Valerie Scatamburlo, in her exploration of the new right and the political correctness movement, argues that the left may be failing because the left is fighting the wrong kind of fight. She takes specific aim at intellectuals on the left for their fetishizing of text, a fetishism that has allowed them to become as disconnected from their material surroundings as the texts in their studies are from their material productions. She states that "contemporary post-al theory suffers from some major theoretical and political ailments. First of all, in privileging the discursive and the textual, it has often failed to address concrete material conditions and, in doing so, has forfeited the possibility of making meaningful interventions in the interest of social change" (196). Indeed, as she and Arif Dirlik, Aijaz Ahmad, E. San Juan, Samir Amin and a host of others continue to point out, the struggle is not a struggle over and within culture, but in culture's interrelationship with social and economic relationships. This distinction provides for an important juxtaposition for Scatamburo in reference to the success of the right because "it is imperative, however, to reiterate a point made in the introduction to this book--



that the Right has successfully understood the *interrelationship* between culture and socio-political and economic relations" (173). They also are not afraid to bring up the word that seems anathema in certain intellectual circles: capitalism. The right celebrates it while the intellectual left seems happy to ignore it. By ignoring context, and ignoring history, the left has abandoned context to the right, and the right just has to venerate the wonderful progress that capitalism has provided throughout a white-washed history for all who truly deserve it.

The legacy of anti-poverty legislation, however, has been anything but wonderful. Perhaps it is because of this that so few anti-welfare reformers ever indicate the limitations of the system that they seek to do away with completely. Welfare, as implemented by the United States, has always been anti-women, anti-people of color, and, ironically, anti-poor. When the first attempt at a national, governmentally directed anti-poverty program appeared with the New Deal during Franklin Roosevelt's tenure in office, those protections that were provided were delivered with an asymmetry that continued throughout the twentieth century. The Social Security Act of 1935

established a system of insurance for the aged, Aid to Dependent Children [ADC] and insurance for the unemployed that left women and people of color more underserved by the system than the rest of the population. According to Mimi Abramovitz, "the occupations exempted [from the Unemployment Insurance program] in 1935 included large numbers of black, Hispanic, and white women, and men of color" (292). Agricultural laborers and domestic servants were excluded from receiving benefits for unemployment or old-age insurance. Old age pensions were granted to "less than 50 percent of all workers" and "white women and persons of color predominated among the excluded workers" because most benefits were aimed at male workers in industries (249). ADC was granted along with the connected demand that poor women's lives be subjected to state oversight and control. Abramovitz states that "to make this 'deviant' family approximate the 'normal' one, ADC substituted itself for the male breadwinner, judged female-headed households harshly, and subjected them to strict control" (313). Besides taking an interest in the control of women's reproduction, "the program also mediated competition for women's low-paid market and unpaid domestic labor by denying aid to 'undeserving women'" (314). Since

the states reserved the right to direct the program, variance at the state level often included the ability to determine whether or not the home was suitable (i.e. conformed to the moral sense of the local administrator) or if the mother who headed the household was employable enough to be denied service. The South, in particular, utilized local control to redirect women and men of color into menial jobs in order to preserve southern tradition and reinforce differential treatment. Across the nation as a whole, however, each element of the New Deal was subject to racist and sexist revision as poor women and men and women of color were focused into substandard jobs in the WPA if they were granted jobs, or people of color were given substandard support for housing if they were granted money for housing at all.

Most importantly, Roosevelt's administration wasn't interested in ending poverty through enacting reforms that would compete with pay given in the job market. It was never meant to be a threat to capitalism and access to a pool of labor that needed to remain as cheap as it could. According to Walter Trattner, "Roosevelt was intent on getting the federal government out of 'this business of relief,'" and, presciently describing contemporary fears of

"dependency" on governmental assistance, Roosevelt "was anxious to prevent it from becoming a 'habit with this country'" (287). The New Deal's relief, enacted during a time of horrible economic crisis, was a band-aid applied to a gushing wound, and it did not give the poor the kind of consistent, substantial support that could grant the chance to choose to enter into the workforce in any but the most subordinate position. In 1960, just before the second period of substantial welfare legislation, the reforms initiated during the New Deal were demonstrated to be insufficient in ridding or even diminishing the impact of poverty in the United States (316).

During the 1960s, however, the Kennedy and Johnson administrations attempted to redefine welfare by increasing federal control of and contributions to the program. Effective pressure from civil rights activists coupled with foment in cities across the nation led to sweeping revisions of what the poor were told they could expect. In 1962, the passage of the Welfare Amendments changed the amount of federal support allotted to the Social Security Act, and two years later the passage of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act sought, ostensibly, to end discrimination in employment against women and people of color. In that

same year, 1964, Lyndon Johnson unveiled his many pronged War on Poverty. Surprisingly, given the high hopes many placed on Great Society measures, it was in this context that the foundation of the 1996 PRWORA debate was created. In defining the problem of poverty, poverty was not only depicted as a problem internal to the poor, the actual existence of welfare was redeployed as the item that exacerbated the poor's inherent flaws. The excesses of capitalism and its supporters were off the hook. The primary symptom of this was to be found within the family, and, more specifically, the family's configuration in communities of color.

When Lyndon Johnson delivered his famous speech "To Fulfill These Rights" he outlined what he believed America needed to address in order to right historical oppression of African Americans. On its surface, the speech is an attempt to address the structural inequalities that pervade society, but as part of its central message it includes a containment of those issues within the rhetoric of the family. Johnson begins his speech by stating that equality is not enough. Indeed, he goes so far as to state that "this is the next and the more profound stage of the battle for civil rights. We seek not just freedom but opportunity.

We seek not just legal equity but human ability, not just equality as a right and a theory but equality as a fact and equality as a result." By the end of the speech, however, the structure of society is not so much the emphasis as is the structure of the African American family. Johnson continues by stating that "the family is the cornerstone of our society. More than any other force it shapes the attitude, the hopes, the ambitions, and the values of the child. And when the family collapses it is the children that are usually damaged. When it happens on a massive scale the community itself is crippled" and that "unless we work to strengthen the family, to create conditions under which most parents will stay together—all the rest: schools, and playgrounds, and public assistance, and private concern, will never be enough to cut completely the circle of despair and deprivation" (Johnson Online).

Johnson's rhetoric in this speech depended heavily on one of Johnson's speech writers, Daniel Moynihan, who had just recently finished his highly controversial study *The Negro Family*. In this study, the idea of equality is addressed, but it is addressed by foisting the responsibility for eliminating economic disparity between white and "Negro" families on men and women of color

themselves. Also, it is not even a truly economic issue—it is the internal economy of the mind and or the moral senses that is Moynihan's battleground. Moynihan, "echoing" the words delivered by LBJ, states that "the principal challenge of the next phase of the Negro revolution is to make clear that equality of results will now follow. If we do not, there will be no social peace in the United States for generations" (3). In order to do this, white Americans, the presumed audience for this work, need to understand that "at the heart of the deterioration of the fabric of Negro society is the deterioration of the Negro family." Overlapping Johnson's message, Moynihan lets his audience know that "the family is the basic social unit of American life; it is the basic socializing unit. By and large, adult conduct in society is learned as a child" (5).

In Moynihan's estimation, those within the African American community that have succeeded have done so because their families have remained intact. He discerns a split between the upper and lower classes within the community, arguing that the upper classes are characterized by some of the strongest families within America as a whole and the lower classes whose families are "highly unstable" (5). From this point, Moynihan focuses on those factors within

the African American household that work to maintain instability and would thus undercut any attempt to rectify injustice from above. The increase in public assistance, for example, does not indicate a failure of an economic system to provide enough support for a working population. Instead, in his opinion, "the steady expansion of this welfare program, as of public assistance programs in general, can be taken as a measure of the steady disintegration of the Negro family structure over the past generation in the United States" (14).

Moynihan didn't want readers to think that he was being overly reductive or simplistic in his scholarship, however, stating that "there is no one Negro community. There is no one Negro problem. There is no one solution. Nonetheless, at the center of the tangle of pathology is the weakness of the family structure" (30). Thus, nonetheless, there does seem to be one solution, one problem and one element of the community that needs to be solved before progress can take place. This is not, however, a change in the behavior of the white community. The prerequisite for change is placed within the African American community itself: the locus of responsibility for



continued oppression is placed on African American "matriarchs."

Adding some sexism to go along with his racism, Moynihan states that most white families are successful because they are headed by a two parent household in which, although he does not directly argue for white masculine dominance, only 20 percent of households include a dominant female head. Against this, Moynihan places African American households where a woman governs 44 percent of families. Shocked and chagrined by this finding, Moynihan states that this matriarchy "reinforces itself over the generations" (31). It is able to reinforce itself, in Moynihan's opinion, through the number of children born out of wedlock coupled by the number of women who are simply not choosing to get married. The consequences, according to Moynihan, are devastating. He states that "Negro children without fathers flounder—and fail" (35). In order to correct this problem, African American men need to break the cycle of "matrifocality." They need to go into the military. Besides a presumed racial egalitarianism in the armed forces, Moynihan suggests that "there is another special quality about military service for Negro men: it is an utterly masculine world. Given the strains of the

disorganized and matrifocal family life in which so many Negro youth come of age, the Armed Forces are a dramatic and desperately needed change: a world away from women" (42). Black mothers, fathers and children need to change. But what about white America? Moynihan lets them know that, overall, it is not their fault. The breakdown of the African American family was inherited from injustices way back when, not from specific injustices that continued into Moynihan's era. In order to reassure his target audience, Moynihan states that "at this point, the present tangle of pathology is capable of perpetuating itself without assistance from the white world. The cycle can be broken only if these distortions are set right" (47). Any effective policy does not or should not include a readjustment of the category of whiteness in its relationship as structurally superior or advantaged over folks of African American ancestry. Moynihan, in summation of his study, states that "the policy of the United States is to bring the Negro American to full and equal sharing in the responsibilities and rewards of citizenship. To this end, the programs of the Federal government bearing on this objective shall be designed to have the effect, directly or indirectly, of enhancing the stability and resources of the

Negro American family" (48). American policy should only provide the framework that will enable "them" to do the work for themselves. As individuals, of course.

The reinvigorated emphasis on the individual rights and "personal responsibilities" had devastating consequences from that era to the present day. Although less compelling in many instances than the critiques leveled against them over the past several years, Omi and Winant's description of the political transformation that took root in the late 1960s is useful in its relevance to the discussion of race and welfare reform. They state that, in the contemporary era, "discrimination may be an illegitimate infringement on individual rights, but it can no longer be a legitimate source for group demands. What the neoconservatives opposed was therefore not racial equality, but racial collectivity" (131). Moreover, following this logic, no distinctions can be made on the basis of *historical* oppression of groups. History simply begins and ends with the individual experience. Thus, disparity between the effects of racism between groups is flattened out. White workers who now claim to suffer under "reverse racism" have an equal ability to claim discrimination against themselves within a system that

refuses to directly address race. Omi and Winant state that "under the guise of creating a truly 'color-blind' society, administration officials sought to define and eliminate the 'new racism' *against whites*" (135).

Omi and Winant argue that this position began to consolidate during the election campaign of George Wallace in 1968. During the campaign, Wallace distanced himself from the blatantly racist discourse of his earlier forays into politics, but managed to provide the same kind of social critiques by simply leaving reference to race out in favor of a rhetoric that argued for traditional values. Wallace "was forced to incorporate his racial message as a subtext, implicit but 'coded,' in a populist appeal" (124). Following this, the "racial reaction that developed in the last two decades claimed to favor racial equality. Its vision was that of a 'color-blind' society where racial considerations were never entertained in the selection of leaders" (117). This rhetorical stance received official support during the Nixon campaign and administration, as indicated by the creation of the so-called "southern strategy" that "suggested a turn to the right and the use of 'coded' antiblack campaign rhetoric" (124). Tellingly, Nixon turned to none other than Moynihan for advice on

welfare and, "on the advice of Daniel Patrick Moynihan drew up a welfare reform plan featuring a guaranteed annual income" (124).

Although Omi and Winant compartmentalize this agenda as a "neoconservative" one, its greatest impact on social programs was during the Clinton administration with the passage of the PRWORA, the culmination of the third era of welfare reforms that began in the 1980s. As Pandey and Collier-Tenison outline, under Reagan, welfare reform had resulted in the consolidation of 77 programs into 9, with a decrease in federal spending and taxation. Under Bush, with the passage of the Daniel Moynihan's Family Support Act of 1988, more discretion to experiment was handed over to the states. Under Clinton, when welfare reform was brought up again by conservatives, "many Democrats viewed it as an opportunity to reach out to conservative elements of their constituencies" (61). In this piece of legislation, Aid to Families with Dependent Children [AFDC] was eliminated. In its place, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families [TANF] was created. In the debates that surround the passage of this act, little of the history of welfare's inadequacy is included. On each side of the debate, it is welfare that needed to be reformed, and that,

as Moynihan had initiated in his study, those that are willing to accept welfare need to be reformed as well.

Although readily and summarily dismissed by left intellectuals who charged him with sloppy, retrograde pseudoscientific research in *The Bell Curve*, Charles Murray was the most prominent voice in addressing the need to reform those individuals that "choose" to go on welfare, and he was the voice that popularized the specific theories that legitimized the withdrawal of the state from public welfare in 1996. As Brendon O'Connor has pointed out, "Murray had suggested a decade earlier in *Losing Ground* that the way to overcome these pathologies was to remove the state as welfare provider, because it had created and fostered these pathologies by offering too much assistance with too few strings attached. Murray's answer, that increased 'personal responsibility' should be expected of the poor, found increasing numbers of advocates during the 1980s and 1990s" (13). Just before the PRWORA debate began, Herrnstein and Murray's *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life* was published. Essentially, their argument depends on the same kinds of distinctions that Moynihan arranged as support for his argument that married, successful white women and men have

done enough and that the problem, if there is one, is inherent within poor families and is beyond the areas within which white middle and working class America can have an impact through legislation and governmental action. In *The Bell Curve*, the inherence, the interiority of the problem, goes a step further than what Moynihan had argued. The potential for success, in their view, is actually hindered by social reforms that aim to give assistance because, in their opinion, those folks that are at the low end of the cognitive spectrum tend to not be able to understand the full implication that "dependency" on the state will have. Moynihan argued that the state should have programs that moralize the poor. Murray and Herrnstein, on the other hand, epitomizing the major change between the second and the third period, argue that the government should not and cannot do anything to try to solve poverty at all.

As with Moynihan, family is a central concern, and, even within that area of emphasis, responsibility is placed on the behavior of mothers. The authors, echoing Moynihan and Johnson, state that "marriage is a fundamental building block of social life and society and is thus a good place to start, because this is one area where much has changed

and little has changed, depending on the vantage point one takes" (168). For Herrnstein and Murray, little has changed in the value of marriage as a universal category to which all citizens should conform if they wish to experience full enfranchisement in American economic and social life, but much has changed in the realization of marriage as the expected outcome of relationships. Too few women are getting married, too many women are having children out of wedlock, and too many of those women that have children out of wedlock are on welfare. The authors state that there are two possible reasons for this, that either welfare causes illegitimacy or that it enables it. They side with the latter stating that, "the alternative, which we find more plausible, is that the welfare check (and the collateral goods and services that are part of the welfare system) enables women to do something that many young women might naturally like to do anyway: bear children" (186). Moreover, the authors argue, it is not just any woman that would want to have children outside of marriage. They state that "poor women of low intelligence seemed especially likely to have illegitimate babies" (200). Additionally, the authors feel that low cognitive ability can be correlated with the "choice" to go on



welfare as well, stating "the smarter the woman is, the more likely she will be able to find a job, the more likely she will be able to line up other sources of support (from parents of the father of the child), and the more farsighted she is likely to be about the dangers of going on welfare" (194). Later they state bluntly that "just as low IQ was increasingly prevalent as the level of male unemployment increased, so also is low IQ more prevalent among mothers as their dependency on welfare rises" (376). In their estimation, the choice to go on welfare is compounded by other characteristics in addition to low intelligence that makes the home environment "pathological" in the sense that Moynihan had discussed thirty years prior. They state that "going on welfare signifies personality characteristics other than IQ that are likely to make the home environment deficient—irresponsibility, immaturity, or lack of initiative, for example" (224).

As a result of their scholarship, they hope that America will "get serious" about these problems and do something about them. But what is to be done? In terms of racial inequality, the U.S. needs to return to older, assimilationist models and a concentration on the individual. Regarding racism, the authors state that "the

evidence presented here should give everyone who writes and talks about ethnic inequalities reason to avoid flamboyant rhetoric about ethnic oppression" (340). In academia, correctives aimed at righting structural exclusion have resulted in "reverse discrimination." They wonder "to what extent is a society fair when people of similar ability and background are treated as differently as they are now?" And then they tell themselves that "in 1964, the answer would have been unambiguous: Such a society is manifestly unfair. The logic was right then, and right now" (477). The same worries of reverse discrimination hold true in the workplace as well, where the "wrong" of preferential hiring has aided the manifestation of resentment based on race. They state "this nation does not have the option of ethnic balkanization. The increasing proportions of ethnic minorities. . . make it more imperative, not less, that we return to the melting pot as metaphor and color blindness as the ideal. Individualism is not only America's heritage. It must also be its future" (508).

If the future is one of individuals responsible for their own well-being, the past holds the answers to the dilemma. Even though their claims to scientific support were easily jettisoned by critics, critics were less able

or at least less interested in their recourse to culture and history. They state that, throughout the sweep of world history that they cover in three pages, "people were defined by their place, whether in the family or the community. So too for the ancient Greek and Roman philosophers: place was all" (528). People just need to know their place, literally. The "Founders" knew that. The authors point out that "the Founders saw that making a stable and just government was difficult precisely because men were unequal in every respect except their right to advance their own interests" (531). Thus, people should not be addressing the system. Successful white folks have done enough, especially since they had it figured out so long ago in the first place. They should stop worrying. Everything and everyone has a place and any system that tries to correct that "is appropriate in the ant colony or the beehive but not for human beings. Egalitarian tyrannies, whether of the Jacobite or the Leninist variety, are worse than inhumane. They are inhuman." (Murray 533). The call to history in *The Bell Curve* serves as an attempt to valorize a past that can serve to justify a present. In essence, *The Bell Curve* is not a call for action, as Moynihan's report claimed to be, but a call for inaction

that celebrates the default expectations of white working and middle class traditionalists.

Although it took place two years after the PRWORA's passage, John Ashcroft's 1998 interview with *Southern Partisan*, a conservative neo-confederate journal published in South Carolina, offers an excellent example of and avenue for assessing the success of the conservative critique of culture that is concomitant with the argument for welfare reform because it epitomizes the terms of the debate set by the redeployment of history used by Murray without making reference to the pseudoscience that made *The Bell Curve* so dismissible by so many. In the interview, Ashcroft attacked intellectuals for assaulting the nation's history, and urged his interviewers to keep up the good fight. Ashcroft states, "revisionism is a threat to the respect that Americans have for their freedoms and the liberty that was at the core of those who founded this country, and when we see George Washington, the founder of our country, called a racist, that is just total revisionist nonsense, a diatribe against the values of America. Have you read Thomas West's book, *Vindicating the Founders?*" (quoted in *Nomination* S885). When Ashcroft is told that the interviewer has not read that specific book,

but is familiar with West, Ashcroft continues by stating that

I wish I had another copy: I'd send it to you. I gave it away to a newspaper editor. West virtually disassembles all of these malicious attacks the revisionists have brought against our Founders. Your magazine also helps set the record straight. You've got a heritage of doing that, of defending Southern patriots like [Robert E.] Lee, [Stonewall] Jackson and [Jefferson] Davis.

Traditionalists must do more. I've got to do more. We've all got to stand up and speak in this respect, or else we'll be taught that these people were giving their lives, subscribing their sacred fortunes and their honor to some perverted agenda. (quoted in *Nomination* S885)

When Senators like Barbara Boxer criticized Ashcroft for what he said, Senator Jon Kyl of Arizona entered an op-ed piece written by Thomas West himself into the congressional record as a rebuttal. West was not ashamed of what he had written, nor did he feel Ashcroft should be ashamed of doing some "vindicating" of the founders during the interview, and his submission to congress provides the text of the *Southern Partisan* interview used above. According to West, "In the incoming Bush administration, with

Ashcroft as Attorney General, perhaps America has a chance to go back to the genuine principles of the Founders, without trying to come up with 'new and higher definitions' of them, as has been the habit of the past eight years" (*Nomination S886*).

For West, these "genuine principles" are epitomized by the traditional depiction of white middle and working class families. In voicing his call to defend the founders and American history, West ignores the experience of any mother outside of these classes, especially women of color, in demonstrating that this legacy of history provides a map for the future. West stresses exactly what Americans should understand about their country. He states that, "although America has not always lived up to her own best principles, she has a great and noble heritage. It would be a shame if that heritage were to be squandered because of misunderstandings and distortions of the Founders' principles by today's intellectuals" (179). He wrote the book in order to provide the kind of corrective that he believed was necessary to combat the dissembling he argues predominates history textbooks in the schools and colleges. Along the way, though, the reader is treated not just to lessons about the goodness of the olden days and the

fathers who were responsible for them but also lessons about the contemporary era, its badness, and how America has gone awry. On its face, West's work is as much about creating contemporary policy as it is about recovering history.

West has a great deal to say about the role of women and welfare in society, especially since some contemporary historians and cultural critics have not cast American history in the best of all possible lights. In feminist interpretations of American history, West finds what he believes is a fallacy at the heart of the (yes *the*) feminist argument because it "begs the key question: were women oppressed during the founding era?" (78). It is, in his view, only in the contemporary era that things have become disjointed because of the decay of marriage in general and that, following the limited gains of the 1960s, "it was in [the] context of widespread marital breakdown that large numbers of women voters began to perceive their interest to be different from men's" (79). To illustrate his point, West devotes a special section to the flaws of current scholarship titled "The Differences between Men and Women: Recent Research."

The first "recent" piece of research he details is a 1972 study that "proves that the differences between men and women are based on nature, not only socialization." West asserts that the study proves that "nature points women toward, and most men away from, the care of small children," that "by nature, men are more likely than women to gravitate toward technical expertise and full-time careers," that "most women naturally shy away from the intense, overt competition that leads to success in the job market and war," and that "by nature, women care far more than men about being attractive to others" (89). The second study that he details, also completed during the 1970s, argued that young women in an Israeli kibbutz, who were ostensibly being raised in an egalitarian society absent any external influence, supported this conclusion. West states that, in this study "adolescent girls insisted on undressing in the dark and kept their living areas cleaner. They preferred indoor work, such as staffing the children's living quarters, and courses like psychology" (90).

For West, America has gone wrong because its citizens have lost sight of what it is women really want (whether women know it or not). The single most neglected element



in this devolution is marriage and motherhood. West states that outside of marriage, women can look forward to a life punctuated by violence, promiscuity, and degradation. Marriage "is good for women, however, not primarily because it protects them from violence, but above all because it is closely connected with their happiness" (93). And further "marriage is good for women because it enables them to have their children provided for by a man who loves them as an extension of their own being, as opposed to a judge, bureaucrat, boyfriend, or ex-husband who scarcely cares" (94). The problem with this, in terms of poverty, needs to be placed at the doorstep of the Welfare Administration. Welfare is dangerous because it "generates its own antifemale moral (or immoral) stance. It enables women to have children without a husband to support them and her" (107). Moreover, West asserts that welfare has been a complete waste, stating that "between 1965 and 1994, the government spent \$5.4 trillion on poverty programs, enough money to buy every factory, office building, hotel, motel, airline, trucking company, and all the manufacturing equipment in the United States" (143). In this passage, West's theorizing connects directly with the policy discussion in that it mirrors a similar statement provided

by Senator Phil Gramm in the PRWORA debates. Gramm states that:

In the past 30 years, we have spent \$5.4 trillion on welfare programs; programs where we were trying to help poor people. Nobody in America knows what a trillion dollars is. So let me try to put that number in perspective. . . .If you take the total value of all buildings, all plants and equipment, and all productive tools in American industry and agriculture combined, they are worth about \$5 trillion. (Gramm S9352).

Welfare, then, needs to cease. Just as women are in danger outside of marriage, women in the welfare system live in "a world not only of poverty but also of barbaric brutalization, emotional chaos, and ever present danger" (145). West's solution is to go back to the charitable, faith-based organizations of early America. Without doing that, "large numbers of women will continue to live this way until Americans once again distinguish between the deserving and undeserving poor, and provide the undeserving only with the basic necessities in strictly governed group homes that show society's disapproval of women bearing children outside of marriage and of able-bodied men

refusing to work" (144). For support for this type of change, West turns to Marvin Olasky, who's work demonstrates how "eighteenth- and nineteenth-century combined Franklin's hardheaded realism about effects of indiscriminate generosity with a warmhearted sympathy for those who fell into need through no fault of their own" (139). The answer is compassionate conservatism.

In *Compassionate Conservatism*, Marvin Olasky indicates one of the ways in which the neoconservative movement maneuvered to escape criticism for being hardhearted and co-opt the rhetoric of "compassion" without having to give up the desire to gut social programs. He states that "the word *compassion* from the 1960s through the early 1990s was as much a code word for liberals as *family values* has become for conservatives" (2). Echoing Omi and Winant's concept of rearticulation in ways similar to the first quotation, Olasky states that "the first person to use the specific phrase *compassionate conservatism* during the past two decades, from what I've been able to uncover, was Vernon Jordan," when Jordan had chastised Reagan for not showing any (9). After his conversion to Christianity, Olasky set out on a mission to justify traditional values and to extend the impact of those values more concretely in

the public sector. Viewing Christianity as a religion based, ostensibly, on compassion, Olasky decided that it would be a good idea to take away the cudgel that had been used by liberals and progressives that had demonized the god-fearing folks. In this repackaging of compassion, liberals and progressives are demonstrated to be the individuals most at fault for the decay of traditional values because of shortsighted, anti-faith initiatives. In regards to welfare, Olasky states "the major flaw of the modern welfare state is not that it is extravagant, but that it is too stingy. It gives the needy bread and tells them to be content with that alone" (4).

For Olasky, the modern American welfare state makes America parallel to Rome in troubling ways (and we all know what happened to Rome, of course). Contrasting Rome with the more localized, faith-based support offered by early Christianity, Olasky argues that "Rome's welfare system emphasized bread and circuses: give the poor enough food to keep them in misery and gladiator contests to distract them from their plight" (205). Rome's programs neglected the "spirit" and, fundamentally, neglected addressing conformity to healthy, traditional values thereby enabling social decay. As West argued, programs need to discern

between the truly deserving and the chronic, sinful, undeserving who do not live according to those values that should define a healthy nation. Olasky rediscovers a trend in theological history, counting two major reformations that helped to recenter life on godly behavior as opposed to mundane desires for satiety and comfort. He believes that it is time for a third moral reformation that will "clean" up this problem, stating that Americans should support "work rather than begging, help those unable to work, but no help to the able but lazy: this was the compassionate conservatism of the Reformation" and that "we've moved back to the ancient Roman emphasis on bread and circuses, and we need not only welfare reform but a third welfare reformation" (207).

For a model of the way in which we should treat the poor, Olasky points to American history before the New Deal, and the further one goes back the better history seems. As Omi and Winant argued in reference to coded language, so does Dorothy Roberts, who states that "it is commonplace to observe that 'welfare' has become a code word for 'race.'" People can avoid the charge of racism by directing their vitriol at the welfare system instead of explicitly assailing Black people" (111-112). In Olasky's

work the code is not very coded at all. America's first European colonizers provide Olasky with the best juxtaposition with contemporary welfare reform, and though Olasky doesn't reference race, his utilization of specific concepts as mobilized in the American popular imaginary, reflects the fact that he doesn't need to. America was an empty wilderness conquered by Europeans and future Americans benefited from the specific definition of Christian marriage that they immigrated with. They knew "it was not good for man to be alone" and that knowledge "extended, in a looser sense, to their understanding of neighborhood: It was not good for man to be alone in a social wilderness. Through compassion they cut through vines and chopped down some of the trees. They used that wood to build good fences with swinging gates, and left some trees standing for shade and beauty." Contemporary readers should understand that, because of their (now literal) assault on wilderness, "up until the past several decades, poor Americans as well as the better-off were privileged to live in neighborhoods, not wilderness" (218). Juxtaposing this era with our own, Olasky is moved to state that "interestingly, those charged with assaulting the 'Central Park jogger' acknowledged that on that

occasion they were 'wilding'—wilding the natural sport of wilderness returned" (218-219). Welfare is to blame. And because of its degenerative impact, "the poor generally, and the homeless individuals specifically, are treated like zoo animals at feeding time—some as carnivores who need cuts of meat thrown in their cages, and some as cute looking pandas who feed on bamboo shoots" (222).

In order to prove the efficacy of compassionate conservatism, Olasky sets out on a road trip with his son, Daniel. Daniel, he is proud to relate, already understands the basics of the program. Olasky says "I could ask him, 'What's the literal meaning of compassion?' He would answer, 'Suffering with.' I could ask him, 'What's wrong with just giving money to a homeless guy?' He'd reply, "It's not challenging him to change'" (21). *Compassionate Conservatism* is, in essence, a call to join Daniel and Marvin on a journey across the country in order to see concretely how liberalism and progressivism have failed and to spread the new gospel according to Olasky. Along the way, Olasky intersperses the journey with significant turning points in the history of his new movement, and ends by providing a speech given by his most famous convert and supporter, George W. Bush.

During the 1995-1996 sessions of Congress, Olasky left the University of Texas to work in conjunction with neoconservatives to get his message integrated into the basic logic of the debate. Along the way, Olasky "converted" a number of important Republican leaders to his message, including: Bill Bennet, Newt Gingrich, John Ashcroft, Dan Coats, Rick Santorum, Steve Largent, J. C. Watts, and Jim Talent—and these were just those big names that *vocally* supported his philosophy. Olasky saw his role as essentially rhetorical, as an attempt to redefine the terms of discourse by, primarily, redefining terminology. He states that, in working closely with them, "we came up with some expressions that caught on (5-6). And they really did catch on. A brief review of the *Congressional Record* shows how dozens and dozens of remarks made on the floor of the House and the Senate during the debates of 1995 and 1996 follow the logic and wording of Olasky's enterprise. J.C. Watts of Oklahoma stated "we need to make sure that we no longer measure compassion by how many people are on welfare" (Watts H3762). Dunn of Washington stated that Congress needs to "talk about compassion, because some of our Members seem to have a distorted sense of what that term means (Dunn H2659). From California,



Seastrand argued that "the Republican bill will make the welfare system more just, more compassionate, more efficient, and more responsible" (Seastrand H3712) .

Ohioan Chabot pointed out that Republicans will "replace a failed system of despair with a more compassionate solution that will work to get people off the public dole" (Chabot H3337), and Funderburk of North Carolina stated that the expenditures made in the maintenance of this "public dole" demonstrated that "their system is not compassionate, their system is obscene" (Funderburk H3736). Representative Norwood of Georgia, like many others, argued that it was not just an issue of wasted money, but also an issue of encouraging unhealthy, untraditional lifestyles. Norwood stated that "perhaps they think it is compassionate for our system to encourage illegitimacy" (Norwood H3736).

These politicians, however, argued that their efforts defined true compassion. Sam Johnson stated that "The Republican welfare bill does not lack compassion. It is born out of compassion" (Johnson H3736). Focusing attention back on private, faith-based initiatives, Ashcroft argued that "our welfare system rewards behavior that keeps people powerless. It thwarts the efforts of private and religious charitable organizations to care for

the needy. It discourages the genuine compassion of the American people. Our welfare system has waged a war against the human spirit" (Ashcroft S7237). Santorum, urging for this defederalization of welfare, urged similarly that "the Governors understand, at least the ones that are talking to me, that they need to go further. They need to get down into the local communities, into the nonprofit organizations, into the folks who really have compassion" (Santorum S8076). And the folks who have this type of compassion won in 1996 when PRWORA was signed into law.

With the passage of PRWORA The responsibilities for providing assistance under TANF moved *completely* from the federal to the state level. As Whiticker and Time point out, this means, in effect, that the poorest families in the poorest states will not have the ability to benefit from the social safety net AFDC had once provided because ideological and budgetary restraints at the state level serve as an obstacle to any effective implementation. States that "exhibit an acceptance of class inequality and its consequences" have no impetus to redefine their relationship with the most marginalized of its citizenry. Additionally, the rush to state administration does not take into account the fact that some states "have very poor

records on race relations and use coded messages that are intended to produce racial fear, with the aim of limiting social welfare policies that may assist poor minorities" (82).

And with this legislation that makes marriage and sexual relations a primary focus of reform, poor women's personal lives came to the front of public discourse. The construction of the law "reflected that able-bodied poor who are of working age should change their reproductive and parenting behavior and engage in productive employment" (Pandey 60). The most voiceless members of America's population were put on public trial as politicians and pundits debated who was or was not worthy of welfare, which had transformed from a safety net into a privilege. Pandey and Collier-Tenison express chagrin that more feminist voices have not joined in the defense of the lives and livelihood of impoverished women, since "over 95% of adult welfare recipients are women" so "women experience these reforms disproportionately" (66). Middle class interests support the invisibility and voicelessness of American subalterns. Pandey and Collier-Tenison state that "feminist emphasis on expansion of women's workplace rights furthered the assumption that women ought to work

outside the home, possibly confusing middle-class women's *right* to work with poor women's *obligation* to do so" (58). This obligation to work under PRWORA for everyone that needs support does not include much in the way of educational support, impacts poor in rural communities differentially as they have less access to labor markets or transportation to move there, and imposes severe and unforgiving time restrictions that have done a lot to end welfare but nothing to negate poverty.

Ultimately, the poor's vulnerability set the stage for the next administration's political gains. As Weiss argues, the "centerpiece of Bush's 'new conservatism' is the expansion of faith-based 'charitable choice,' a provision in Bill Clinton's 1996 welfare reform law" (Weiss 35). But, given the arguments described by the theorists of the right, the 1996 battle was likely to be the first in a series of battles aimed at ridding the possibility of providing the poor enough assistance to impact the ways in which capitalism can continue to exploit those who find themselves at the bottom. In the first era of government welfare legislation with the New Deal, too little was provided to too few. In the second era governmental support for the poor was vilified for exacerbating the

conditions of poverty, and the answer to this dilemma was not more adequate but more moral support. In the contemporary era, the most moral support is none at all. Individuals freed from the government "trough" will make effective decisions that integrate them into the capitalist system as long as society, through white-patriarchal Christian-traditionalism, can shame them into accepting the place folks like Murray, West, Olasky and their legion of political supporters find them fit for. All the right has to do is show what the successful looks like, and since they have dominated history, individuals who try to act like them are told to believe they can. Perhaps, then, it is incumbent upon the progressive left to challenge the assumptions that underwrite dissembling like this. Just as the feminists who considered their own issues to be so central in ways that eclipsed their ability to look beyond their own expectations in the world of work, those on the left in general might take some interest in the structure of Padney's critique. Equal access to an exploitative system does nothing to change the system's exploitative tendencies. Thus, within progressive circles, explicit critiques of the system, capitalism, and the adverse consequences of not challenging that system, of not

organizing against that system, need to be placed in the foreground of any discussion that attempts to enact progressive change, that aims in aiding material practice rather than theory disconnected from history, from context, or from the real folks that are suffering, hidden, under the real impact of what discourse attempts to veil.

**Chapter Five:**  
***The Ties that Bind***

On September 21, 1996, almost one month to the day after PWORA was signed into law, President Clinton signed the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) into law. This law stated that

no State, territory, or possession of the United States, or Indian tribe, shall be required to give effect to any public act, record, or judicial proceeding of any other State, territory, possession, or tribe respecting a relationship between persons of the same sex that is treated as a marriage under the laws of such other State, territory, possession, or tribe, or a right or claim arising from such relationship. (104th Congress 1)

Further it specifies that that marriage would now be known as only between "one" woman and "one" man and that "spouse" refers only to those within these legal marriages.

There was a great deal of debate surrounding the issue at the time, but even those who voted against the bill often placed their negative opinion in reference to same sex marriages in the record. In introducing this bill before the Senate, Republican Trent Lott pointed out that it had received substantial bipartisan support when it

passed the house. He states that "I expect the outcome in the Senate will be lopsided when the vote is taken, as it was in the House, which passed the Defense of Marriage Act, as it is popularly called, by a vote of 342 to 67."

Senator Nickles stated in support of the bill that "We have introduced a measure which I believe is simple, it is limited in scope, and it is based on common sense. It shares broad bipartisan support, including that of President Clinton" and further that "There is nothing earth-shattering here. No breaking of new ground. No setting of new precedents. Indeed, there provisions simply reaffirm what is already known, what is already in place" (S10103). According to Senator Gramm of Texas the tradition of marriage has existed for 5000 years, correcting in biblical time for the chaos of the first thousand that preceded it according to evangelicals, one assumes. Gramm argues that it is important because marriage makes people feel happy, and people decided over time that "it was worth singling out and was worth giving special status above all other contracts in terms of a relationship among people" (S10105). Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts sided with the Senior Senator of his State Edward Kennedy. He stated that he would vote against the



bill, but not because he wanted to protect or affirm same-sex marriage. He states for the record that "I am going to vote against this bill. I will vote against this bill, though I am not for same-sex marriage, because I believe that this debate is fundamentally ugly, and it is fundamentally political, and it is fundamentally flawed." He is against the law because he wants to maintain states' rights, and the trend in the states is already not in favor of same-sex marriage. (S10106). Senator Byrd of West Virginia, a fellow Democrat that has been heralded by some for his anti-war speeches following the invasion of Iraq, followed Kerry and took him to task. "It is incomprehensible to me that federal legislation would be needed to provide a definition of two terms that for thousands of years have been perfectly clear and unquestioned," stated Byrd, "that we have arrived at a point where the Congress of the United States must actually reaffirm in the statute books something as simple as the definition of 'marriage' and 'spouse,'" (S10108). Senator Mikulski, Democrat of Maryland, described her uncomfortably with the Bill stating that "it is an effort to put the President and Democrats on the spot, and at odds with a group of voters who have traditionally supported the

President and the Democratic Party." It is playing politics, and she resented that, especially because she was voting against that constituency that traditionally supported her party. (S10114). She did not play politics, apparently, by voting in favor of the legislation while expecting continued support from the gay and lesbian community for the democratic party.

Urvashi Vaid, in her study of the mainstreaming of gay liberatory politics, pays significant attention to electoral politics in particular, and uses it as a way to describe the trajectory of gay and lesbian activism within electoral politics. The movement has consolidated around three strategies, one of which is electoral politics, the others, include "legal reform" and "lobbying for the enactment of nondiscrimination laws" (107). A virulently negative reactionary politics grew seemingly in tandem to with emerging pro-gay and lesbian politics since the 1960s. She argues that this "New Right opposed civil rights, did not share the liberal ideal of racial and gender equality, and sought to conserve power and wealth in the hands of those who already possessed it" (111).

The Nixon administration was the first in a series of attempts to consolidate conservatives in opposition to the

gains and activism of the left. She states that, following Watergate, Carter seemed to offer some initial hope for activists in support of gay and lesbian rights, but he soon backed off of his commitment (112). His staff agreed to meet with activists, but these meetings were purely symbolic in nature for the politicians. They could appear supportive but not actually have to be supportive, a legacy that she traces through to Clinton (112). During this time, a growing number of folks were becoming more and more aware of the machinations of the right. They seemed to be getting more and more organized and effective. Some, though, thought they should not be taken seriously, that they were extremists that were not significant. Those that were the most radical, however, did (112-13).

Following Carter's timid and distanced semi-support, the Reagan era ushered in twelve years of reactionary politics. Reagan won with overwhelming support from the more religious oriented and extreme variants of conservatism. Part of this alliance included, of course, specifying his rejection of the gay and lesbian community. She quotes Reagan as saying that "'My criticism is that [the gay movement] isn't just asking for civil rights; it's asking for recognition and acceptance as an alternative

lifestyle which I do not believe society can condone, nor can I'" (115). His running mate felt the same. Those within the "moderate" wing of the party remained silent to this bigotry (114).

Following the 1980 election, gay and lesbian activists attempted to participate even more in the following cycle, but discovered that they were not welcome with those that rose to the top of the tickets. At this time activists were also able to note, with some exceptions, the rightward tilt of the democrats even on their usually liberal social positions (116). In 1988, representation in the liberal party was even less possible. At the Democratic convention that year, foreshadowing what later presidential contenders would do, "protestors were kept in a 'free speech area'" (118). The candidate, Michael Dukakis was not a supporter of the movement and had actually signed into law a bill that made it illegal for gay and lesbian couples to have foster children (119). George H. W. Bush proved to be equally evasive—when asked if he supported rights for the gay and lesbian community, he would state that he supported the constitution, whose rights were not all extended to those in the gay and lesbian community, though that remained unstated (121). His campaign manager met

officially with members of the community, including Vaid, but the reaction from the conservative movement forced Bush to back off of his association completely. Following the first Bush, Clinton "courted the gay and lesbian vote was necessity. The Democrats needed to forge a new coalition in order to win" (136). His signing of DOMA, for example, demonstrated how fragile his commitment was. Vaid states that members of the gay and lesbian community find that "the choice is often the lesser of two evils. We are constantly asked to countenance a candidate's antigay rhetoric, policies, or actions because of other positions—pro-choice, anti-death penalty" (120).

In Vaid's estimation, critique of reactionary forces by progressive activists and needs to be readdressed. This requires that the forces that seek to transform society learn to deal rationally with what seems an irrational threat. She does not believe that those folks that want to challenge the forces of the right should call them bigots, for example (309). She asserts that "homophobic campaigns launched by right-wing organizations have as their goal a far larger target than gay and lesbian people alone" (307). The answer for her is an American pluralism, which she believes is the tradition that America has always

represented. For Vaid, the conservatives are a recent development and do not actually represent those values that are truly American. Ultimately, Vaid ends up arguing that it is the responsibility of those on the left to understand how those that oppose them have corrupted a preexisting value, that in order to find for a more rational response to what is depicted as an irrational rebuke of this value.

This position is similar to the one taken by Cindy Patton in her article "Tremble, Hetero Swine." In this article, Patton examines how both sides of the issue end up feeding off of the rhetoric of each other to consolidate their base. She states that it is "ironic that the new right seems to have gained power in part in response to the moderate gains of the gay civil rights movement and the increased visibility it afforded many lesbians and gay men" (233). As part of this process Patton feels that gay and lesbian activists are utilizing the work of those on the right similarly for identity construction. Unfortunately this has the tendency to not take the right seriously and to create an image of conflict that is resolved only through identity construction. Patton does state that the reactionary right, those that would deny gays and lesbians their existence, have reacted to the challenge that it is

acting in a discriminatory way by co-opting the marginality of those folks that they attack. Those that are in the minority, then, are seen as a powerful force that is revising that transcendental value system defended by the fictively minoritarian right (234).

For Patton, as for Vaid, the key to struggle is controlling the definition of identity in order to arrive at a more powerful position. Patton states that it would be best if people would reimagine and redefine their identities in more fluid ways that would allow for more powerful messages to emerge. The entirety of this struggle is a "battle over the grammar of identity construction rather than a process of stabilizing the production of particular, individually appropriable identities" (235). Gaining the advantage of self-definition in this sense, in Patton's definition, allows folks to take part in a post-modern economy that would support their redefinition. Thus, those that exist outside of those areas validated by modern states need to find a way to make themselves more powerful by finding a way to define themselves as citizens of a post-modern state through the control of self-definition. She writes that "the crucial battle for 'minorities' and resistant subalterns is not achieving

democratic representation but resting control over the discourses concerning identity construction." Here, then, economic and state power recedes from the agenda as much as does state. By forgoing these as goals, this criticism allows for comfortable identities in uncomfortable times. It displaces class consciousness with a consciousness of inter-group struggle that may, indeed, be counterproductive to the kinds of politics Patton supports in and of themselves. She writes that "the opponent is not the state as much as it is the other collectivities attempting to set the rules for identity constitution in something like a 'civil society'" (240).

Although Patton explicitly states that the reactionary forces of the right are committing acts of violence upon those constituencies that she hopes to protect, this violence tends to be relegated to the level of discourse rather than lived experience. For Patton and Vaid, the forces of the right are irrational, dated, and theological. They are destined to succumb to progressive change as long as those that challenge them manage to do so in a way that links back to a transcendent liberal pluralism that justifies the challenge in its first instance. Additionally, it tends to imply faith in rational, logical



and literally progressive development, which does not conform to a reality where it is in the best interest of those already in power to maintain their control over that power. Additionally and importantly, examining the irrationality of heterosexist discrimination, a discrimination that reasonable people should be able to overcome, helps to extend the power of the privileged by denying the relationship of other forms of injustice that contribute similar privileges to those that are already in power.

Tessie Liu argues that "by not focusing on the unequal distribution of power which permeates relations between groups, the liberal humanist discourse elides the necessary discussion of power." In her opinion, in reference to anti-racist feminist criticism, feminist scholarship has often tried to flatten out this difference by making a claim to a shared universal identity as women. Moreover, she asserts that critics "need to move beyond the belief that racial thinking is purely an outgrowth of (irrational) prejudices, because such a belief in fact exoticizes racism, in the sense that it makes racism incomprehensible to those that do not share the hatred" (576).

Liu is interested in the ways that racism and sexism are dependent upon notions of generativity. The entire foundation of any racist and sexist order depend upon the control of sexuality. Those values that are continuously mobilized in current political debates are at the core of this: family values. She states that "kinship ties—*family, brotherhood, sisterhood*, each with its own specific meanings—are often evoked to create a sense of group affiliation" (578). The control of sexual expression codifies different roles based on different levels within social and economic hierarchies. In Germany, this control was taken to what was, in her opinion, it's most extreme conclusions, where valorized groups were not allowed to abort their pregnancies while others were forcibly sterilized (580).

While Liu's focus was on the intersection of race, the control of sexuality and the construction of gendered categories, Darren Lenard Hutchinson demonstrates what he calls the multidimensionality of discrimination in "Ignoring the Sexualization of Race: Heteronormativity, Critical Race Theory and Anti-Racist Politics." According to Hutchinson, heterosexist and racial violence are of a kind. Those activists within progressive movements that

experience an even further marginalization are those activists that can speak to this. Hutchinson argues that “‘outsiders’ within progressive political movements mounted substantial ‘internal critiques’ of what they perceived as the essentialist and constricted nature of these movements” (Hutchinson LexisNexis, throughout).

These critiques are significant because they reveal the ways in which previously privileged groups manage to consolidate power even within those groups that, ostensibly, are organized to challenge traditional power structures. Those that dominate progressive movements tend to be defined by categories that dominant society privilege. The more marginalized groups are often unable to set agendas or enact change within progressive groups. This inability to challenge structure is reflected in both the anti-racist and anti-heterosexist movements. Anti-racist activists tend to naturalize heterosexism, while anti-homophobic activists tend to naturalize racism. Hutchinson states that “anti-racist scholars,” for example, “perpetuate heterosexism and marginalize gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people of color in their work” while folks like Andrew Sullivan “[distort] the history and

scope of racism by ignoring the fact that slave marriages had no legal effect.”

Hutchinson argues that once the normativity of the dominant group is challenged in progressive movements, it becomes difficult to justify that group's power and centrality as it becomes increasingly difficult to ignore that way in which that normativity impacts multiple categories of the oppressed. Those critics that examine “intersexional” rather than multidimensional subordination lose this because they neglect the ways in which discrimination has more than a single dimension apart from any specific experience of discrimination itself. Intersection, as a term, is the consideration of a specific embodiment of discrimination or violence. Hutchinson states that the “intersectional paradigm [is] open to a charge that it only applies to a specific category of individuals.” While the study of multidimensionality is good in bringing an understanding of the interlocking nature of oppression, Hutchinson does not include an economic element to his argument. After a reading, it is understood that these manifestations of violence extend from the dominance of racism, heteronormativity and

patriarchy, but the connection to the economic realm is left underdeveloped.

The economic significance of heterosexism, its connection to the maintenance of the proletarian household, is central, however, to Rosemary Hennessy in "Where Value and Labor Meet in the Changing 'Ambiente' of the Maquiladoras," and in the 1917 Collective in their 1995 article "Capitalism and Homophobia: Marxism and the Struggle for Gay/Lesbian Rights."

Rosemary Hennessy connects heterosexism, labor and imperialism. Hennessy begins by relating the story of Carmen/Andres, a worker in a factory that supplies goods to places like Walmart. Carmen/Andres states that when she introduces herself, she states immediately what her sexual orientation is followed by a claim to good treatment (1). When the workers at that facility go on strike it is notable to Hennessy that they include gay and lesbian rights in the workplace among those issues that they bring forward. (1)

Under capitalism, workers are forced to commodify their labor-power, which results in an alienation of those aspects of life that Marx considers central to humanity as a category. The worker labors in the factory creating

surplus value through his or her exploitation, and, concurrently, inside and outside of the factory, this economic exploitation is met with exploitation in service of the reproduction of the social order. She states that "capitalism reaps surplus value not only in the exchange of labor power for a wage but also in the places where labor, subjectivity, and the body meet" (2). The exploited are told to believe that societies need to protect the rights of the individual, but, already, some identities are devalued and are depicted as deserving less protection.

Hennessey writes that:

worker and capitalist are not really equal in the sight of the law, nor are all workers full proprietors of their persons. Some have bodies already marked in ways that modify their personhood and that undermine the proprietary claim they make to their labor power. These marks are part of the living personality of labor power—a supplement to it. (9)

Additionally, "the myth of possessive individualism" is a dangerous fiction that mirrors the obfuscation under capitalism exposed by Marx (10). Workers are led to believe that their labor, that which is naturally a part of their existence, is a separable thing. The dispossession

of the exploited in reference to the process of social reproduction of capitalism concretized with the reification of the nuclear family. This reification of the family as the place where the social needs of the individual must be met depends upon another reification. Just as Marx had predicted the gradual interpenetration of the effects of capitalism in all elements of social life everywhere around the globe, this reification that took place in core economies is gradually being duplicated in those areas of the periphery. Hennessy states "the reification of sexuality" that has happened in the core "is only beginning to take hold in the urban centers in the past few decades and within machista understandings of same sex sexual practices" (7).

The 1917 Collective takes up the history and significance of the reified family and reified sexual expression. They begin, however, by demonstrating how socialist transformation includes fighting on a variety of fronts that seem separate but are in fact connected. It is in the nature of capitalism to break apart those areas it conquers, rearranging social relations where it is beneficial, and blocking oppositional social relations where it can. They state that "capitalism does not

concentrate the pain it causes in a single identifiable class easily mobilized as a united force" and that "capitalism distributes its pain in seemingly chaotic patterns, leaving its victims to fight for their interests in isolation, each separated from the others" (369).

The collective traces this impulse throughout late nineteenth century and early twentieth century socialist movements, and positions this as within those directives given by Lenin in his work like *What is to Be Done?* and elsewhere. They also note that, despite criticisms from other groups, Lenin saw broad left alliances as practicable in reality (370). The Dreyfus case of 1894 provides an example of the kind of support given to defense of others not within the working class. In this case a wealthy Jewish citizen of France who was alleged to have committed a crime was defended by many on the socialist left. Others on the left, however, saw that as a betrayal of class (370). The collective argues that with the anti-Semitism in the Dreyfus affair those that did not argue for Dreyfus's protection misunderstood the nature of capitalism and the multidimensionality of oppression.

Heteronormativity, to the collective, is the result of the historical development of the bourgeois and proletarian



family structures under capitalism. Before the industrial revolution, heterosexist and anti-gay and lesbian activity existed, but it was only during and after the industrial revolution that heteronormativity became as entrenched as it is today (371). This connects to capitalism in that social control through the centralizing of a specific family structure and the exclusion of other forms of family organizing works in favor of capitalism. They state that "the absence of strongly patterned domestic arrangements in the early proletariat did not serve capitalism well. It did not prove easy to integrate childbearing, nursing and childraising into the factories and other enterprises" (371). Possessive individualism, again, further reinforced the perceived need for a nuclear family. The state and society are divided as personal and private is divided. Society and the state are not responsible for the personal, so that which is deemed private becomes the responsibility of the individual. Additionally, the experience of exploitation and domination at work is countered by a different expectation of home life. They write that "a male wage earner, demeaned at work, could accept his lot more readily if he had his personal needs met at home where he was 'boss.'" (371). Legislation was passed in nations

throughout the industrializing core that criminalized that which did not conform while celebrating and reinforcing that which did. In this era, we inherit this structure and its assumptions, including the expectation that families will be financially responsible for other members internally. This separation of family from society that is depicted in dominant ideology as a good thing is, hides the disparate in incomes between families of different classes through inculcated pride through personal responsibility. as seen as a valuable thing take care of all members for all reasons: "under nineteenth century capitalism the central conditioning fact of proletarian domestic life was that the entire cost of raising the next generation was a private rather than a social responsibility" (372). To this day in core economies "it is where the most important emotional needs of individuals (for love, intimacy and emotional security) are supposed to be met. Even for those whose experience of the family is one of misery and alienation, the myth continues to exert considerable influence" (376).

Race, gender, class and sexuality are linked in the reproduction of society under capitalism. For those that identify with those categories at the core of this regime,

those that do not have access to those categories are a threat to the stability of their identity as well as to the system. In 1995, the collective writes that "homosexuals, 'secular humanists,' abortion-rights advocates and feminists are scapegoated for the collapse of family life, as 'family values' becomes the rallying cry of social reaction" (377). Jerry Falwell, following the attacks of September 11, 2001 had that very attack on the tip of his tongue. On the *700 Club*, Falwell stated that "I really believe that the pagans, and the abortionists, and the feminists, and the gays and lesbians who are actively trying to make that an alternative lifestyle, the ACLU, People for the American Way - all of them who have tried to secularize America - I point the finger in their face and say, 'You helped this happen.'" Again, he is a figure easily dismissed as buffoonish and ignorant, but he is a powerful man and the message that he states is a repetition, an echo, of the dominant culture. In the next chapter, we will see an example of how this echo chamber functions.

**Chapter Six:**  
***NASty Genealogies***

In any consideration of dominant ideology, it is important not to allow ideology as a category to become decoupled from material reality. There is no superior realm of essences floating just within the reach of highly trained intellectuals that, because of some special priestly training, keeps the mass of humanity beneath that world of thought and beneath the feet of this priestly class. One of the challenges to a materialist reading of ideology is that the field of intellectual inquiry is imagined to be a flat field of equal access and competition, a market of ideas similar to the imagined free labor market. Ideology cannot impact reality unless it is a living ideology embodied in living beings. Those that express counter-hegemonic knowledge do not argue against other ideologies—they argue against an entrenched political force that has, of course, the economic support of those that occupy the highest positions in the capitalist political order as support. Those that defend the existing hierarchy depend upon their work existing as distinct from this arrangement. The core values that they defend are depicted as ahistorical and objective stances rather than the deeply personal, subjective positions that they truly

are. In *No Mercy*, Jean Stefancic and Richard Delgado try to demonstrate how the forces of the right, after a series of seeming defeats culminating in the 1960s, managed to reverse their ideological fortunes by taking advantage of their financial fortunes that did not cease to exist just because those political candidates most favorable to them were out of government.

Stefancic and Delgado are not radical in their prescriptions. In their hope, a "liberal" political force can combat those forces of the conservative movement that is, for them, embodied only within the American Republican party. The authors state that "our guiding premise is that America works best when it receives roughly equal infusion of ideas from the right and left" (4). In the foreword to the study, Mark Tushnet turns to Gramsci as a way of framing Stefancic and Delgado's assessment of how conservative thought dominates U.S. politics. Summarizing Gramsci, he states that "the war of maneuver occurs as parties face off against each other in elections and other confrontations. The war of position, in contrast, occurs as political actors develop their ideological stances, which Gramsci believed was an essential precondition to success in the war of maneuver" (Stefancic and Delgado ix).

Without examining how this conflicts with Gramsci's urging for organic intellectuals as opposed to traditional intellectuals, Tushnet asserts that the defense against conservative forces are academics and member of the democratic party establishment. He states that "liberal academics have full-time jobs as academics. They have to teach classes, grade papers and examinations, and help run their universities. The network of conservative think tanks supports people who have no obligations other than advancing the conservative cause" (x). The quandary for those that hope for "liberal" thinks tanks is that, as Tushnet admits, "liberal" capitalists are "hesitant to support the development of intellectual positions that might cast some doubt on the virtues of capitalism" (xi).

At the same time that political forces were revising the modest reforms and finding a way to further marginalize already marginalized groups, the funding machine that Stefancic and Delgado examined in *No Mercy* continued to operate seamlessly and unchallenged. The authors write that "The Reagan era was a time of consolidation and experiment. Supply-side economics came and went. Religion, family values, and patriotism came to stay" (3).

Stefancic and Delgado examine thirty four separate think tanks in reference to six specific issues these organizations support: English only education, anti-immigrant legislation, anti-affirmative action, anti-welfare, tort "reform," and the maintenance of "traditional" studies on campuses. While examining these think tanks, they also track the financial support given to them from seventy nine separate funding organizations (160-66). The National Association of Scholars (NAS) is of particular interest in that its participants rally behind a defense of a number of foes that include advocates of feminism, Marxism, deconstruction, pro-gay and lesbian politics, and, above all, affirmative action and multiculturalism. They depict themselves as an embattled minority, but they are most certainly defenders of a long American tradition.

In 1991 an article by Lynne Cheney titled "The Importance of Stories" appeared in NAS's journal *Academic Question*. She begins her article by describing the experience of seeing Pueblo storytellers. She states that "as is often true of art, the more one learns about the Pueblo storytellers, the more deeply one appreciates them." Describing their performance, she writes that "their eyes

are shut or gazing fixedly upward as they perform an amazing feat that we all take for granted: creating other worlds in this one; vivifying times that have passed, people that are gone forever, events that are known only through memory" (7). The problem with modern culture, according to Cheney, is that citizens do not have a connection to the past. We live in an era that privileges the present and excludes our history by telling us only about now. She argues that this can be seen "from tabloids through talk shows to MTV. Soap operas are a quintessential example of present-tense narrative. The characters move in various combinations and permutations through a world constantly being liberated from the past" (8). She wonders if there is an escape from this, asking "but what about the other kind of story, the kind of story that opens our eyes, wakes us up to the fact that we are part of a continuity extending through time?" (8).

This past that she is hoping modern education will help citizens come back into contact with has definite boundaries. She argues that "in an essay called 'Fame and the Founding Fathers,' Douglas Adair points out the importance that stories had for our nation's founders. They recommended narratives of the past as a guide to



correct behavior" (9). She hopes to bring people into contact with the Old Testament, Alfred North Whitehead, or even Simon Schama's history of the French Revolution (9). Even math can benefit from storytelling. An instructor could talk of Greece's Euclid, Italy's Girolamo Saccheri, Germany's Carl Freidrich Gauss or Russia's Nicolai Lobachevsky (10).

And what of Middle Eastern civilizations' contribution? Like, for example, algebra, a word that is and of itself of Arabic descent? Not so much. Cheney's world of the past doesn't include folks like that (she does manage to mention Martin Luther King Jr., however—not his speech on Vietnam, but his "Letter from Birmingham Jail"). When she recounts that Harvard's chairman of sociology "described the reading of such classic theorists of society as Freud, Toqueville, and Weber as 'antiquarian exegesis'" and then said that courses that utilized them exhibited "the 'practice of a discredited Anglophile sociology'" it makes her ask "Anglophile? To read Freud, the Austrian; Toqueville, the Frenchmen; Weber, the German?" (11). Cheney is right, in a sense, that it is important to reconnect people to history that they are not familiar with through writings that they might not otherwise read. The

philosophy that appears in *Academic Quarterly* that embodies the agenda of NAS has a history, and that history has a very American response. By examining that history, and a the response of two storytellers that resisted it, the history of racial science that serves as a backdrop for much of currently existing reactionary groups comes into view. Unfortunately, neither the history nor the two story tellers are likely to be found in the tradition scholars like Cheney would like to be seen taught on campuses.

In *Race and Manifest Destiny*, Reginald Horsman presents an overview of Anglo-Saxonist ideology in the first half of the nineteenth century. Anglo-Saxonism was an outgrowth of American and European efforts to prove white supremacy. Many of the supposed founding fathers of the nation relied upon a definition of ethnicity that rejected the impact of the Norman conquest in favor of an imagined past in which their imagined forbearers, the Anglo-Saxons, had managed to create the kind of anti-feudal, freedom-loving society that they believed they were going to create in the Americas (10-11). Horsman spends a great deal of time discussing Jefferson, whose celebration of the small, independent Anglo-Saxon farm belies the hypocrisy inherent in his owning of a number of slaves. By

linking up this focus with the development of a "sun following" Aryan myth that was being expounded in Europe, Horsman shows how the seeds of a belief in innate superiority as well as the necessitation of imperialism were sown (25). In this time, nascent approaches to human sciences tended to be culturally self-referential; European scientists had set about proving their own superiority and by explicit extension the cultures in which they lived. England and Englishness receive special attention by Horsman, in that theorists like Carlyle were arguing for its inheritance of all that was imagined to be best from Northern European Cultures (161-2).

In Revolutionary America, an environmentalist focus was eventually set against a view of polygenesis, or separate creations as American scientists were developed their own school of anthropology. This theory helped provide intellectual support for the enslavement of African Americans as it supported imperial expansion by naturalizing the inferiority of Native Americans. Horsman attempts to demonstrate how this was a movement that impacted ideology across the United States, indicating New England's role as important as the South's in the creation and popularization of Anglo-Saxon supremacy (139-157).

Anglo-Saxonism had a great deal of impact on political ideology overall, especially as it was realized in US expansionism and nativism. In reference to Native Americans, Horsman tries to show how US policies depended upon racial science as a support for removal and relocation policies. Additionally, in reference to the Mexican-US war, white supremacist policies allowed for the expansion of territory as it allowed for the concomitant denigration and eroticization of Mexican men and women (208-10). Resistance to this movement, for Horsman, still comes from predictable camps. In the chapter titled "Confused Minority" Horsman attempts to provide a counter-balance to a history of white supremacy by demonstrating resistance to the dominant current of thought (249-250). The unfortunate impact is a re-centering of privileged, white voices. Although it is important to indicate that there was resistance to the kinds of white supremacist ideologies that he has detailed in the previous chapters, by centering on those white folks that opposed *some* aspects of white supremacy, Horsman ends up valorizing their speaking position in a way that neglects non-whites that were resisting.

In March of 1857 Harriet Jacobs wrote a letter to Amy Post where she wondered, "where dwells that just Father—whom I love—and in whom I believe—is his arm Shortened—Is his power Weakened" (240). At the beginning of March, the Supreme Court had, in a 7 to 2 decision, determined that Dred Scott could not sue for his freedom because he was a slave. In the opinion given by Chief Justice Taney at the conclusion of the case, Taney argued that, while states could give freed slaves citizenship, this did not in any sense confer national citizenship to them because "this was state citizenship for strictly local purposes and it did not make a person a citizen of the United States" (Kelly et. al. 270). In her letter, Jacobs continues by stating that "Man is following the evil devices of his own heart—for he is not willing to acknowledge us made in Gods own Image—have not the decision of the last few days—in Washington—decided this for us?" (240).

In *Reconstructing Womanhood*, Hazel Carby examines the work of African American women writers as resisters in particular. In this work, Carby demonstrates how African American women authors utilized the novel format to impact their readers' understanding of this history and to attempt to bring about political change. In the second chapter,

Carby demonstrates how Harriet Jacobs used the novel format in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* to challenge the ways in which "true" womanhood was configured by white patriarchal culture (47, 56-60). In the choices she made in representing her story in this work, Jacobs manages to disassemble the stock figure of the white mistress in order to show how the figure was simply a ruse that covered over capitulation to violence. Additionally, Jacobs is able to redefine what womanhood means from her perspective, and does so in a way that does not allow that new definition to be contingent upon response from outside readers. Additionally, in this new configuration, Hopkins does not let the North off the hook—she utilizes literary conventions ironically, playing off of reader expectations of a happy ending, for example, to demonstrate continuing subordination and servitude in the north.

While the system of slavery may have been a Southern institution, the ideology of racial distinction that undergirded that system was a national and international phenomenon. The litany of racist complaints that emerged during this time have had a strong staying power, appearing and reappearing in work in each generation in a new form. As abolitionists gained momentum in the first few decades

of the nineteenth century, racial distinction was becoming accepted as a legitimate element of comparative ethnology. When Jacobs references the idea that African Americans were not seen as beings created in God's image, she referenced a significant element of the debate that had, under the work of many American "scientists" drawing on biblical creation, moved to the forefront of the racial science movement: polygenesis. Polygenesisists, those that believed there were multiple creations of distinct creations, would come to dominate in the decades following Jacobs freedom.

Moreover, as part of this point of view, the actual claim to humanity of African Americans was actively challenged. The initial attempts to classify humanity within the natural sciences provided an avenue to deny it. In 1699, for example, Edward Tyson published a study in which he sought to demonstrate the characteristics of what he believed was the lowest order of man. *Orang-Outang, sive Homo Sylvestris: or, the Anatomy of a Pygmie*, even in its title, indicates the direction in which racial science, especially through the creation of a scale of gradation, was dehumanizing people of color (Stephan 7). The attempt to distinguish where "human" ends and "animal" begins was central to an even more influential work by von Linné, who,

in his *System of Nature*, included the "Orang Utan" as the lowest order of man amongst the plethora of human categories that he utilized in his study. According to his "alphabet of nature" those described most nobly are the Caucasians: "Fair, sanguine, brawny. European. Hair yellow, brown, flowing; eyes blue; gentle, acute, inventive. Covered with close vestments. Governed by laws." Those of a different skin tone, however, are described differently: "Black, phlegmatic, relaxed. Hair black, frizzled; skin silky; nose flat; lips tumid; crafty, negligent, Anoints himself with grease. Governed by caprice" (Eze 13).

By 1774, Edward Long took this debate to an extreme in his *History of Jamaica*. Recalling the sentiments of "Greek and Roman" authors to Africans, Long tells how Africans had been described as "incestuous, savage, cruel, and vindictive, devourers of human flesh, and quaffers of human blood, inconstant, base, cowardly, devoted to all sorts of superstitions." He continues by stating that, though he wishes these descriptions were exaggerations, "we find every charge corroborated" (Kitson 6). Long argues that races are fixed, as demonstrated by the continuance of



these racial characteristics in each generation, and that, ultimately, each race might have a different origin.

In the 1850s Louis Agassiz, a swiss naturalist whose original area of expertise was the study of fossilized fish, arrived in America to pursue his research at Harvard. While in America, however, his interests broadened. He traveled to Philedelphia where he met Morton and was "impressed with his collection of skulls" as well as his conclusions and methodology (Smedley 235). After meeting an individual of African descent for the first time, Agassiz was disgusted by his appearance, and sympathized with the plight of whites that had the misfortune of having to live in close proximity with slaves (Smedly 235). Agassiz decided that Africans were inferior and represented an order of being distinct and separate from the Europeans. According to Smedley, all important instructors of natural history in the United States in the later half of the nineteenth century were influenced by Agassiz (236).

Aggasiz was an influential northern voice of racial science, but he was not an exception. In 1853, the *New York Evening Post* published a translation of a German natural scientist that typified the new scientific approach to racial distinction. Hurmann Burmeister, who completed

his studies in Brazil, pointed out characteristics that he felt would apply to descendants of slaves throughout the world. When speaking about their mental capacity, Burmeister frames the slaves in the same simian category that Edward Taylor had posited over a century and a half earlier:

The mental faculties proper have the first claim to our consideration. I believe that I am defining with justice the negro mental capacity, when I state, that the negro has the creative powers of mind in an inferior, and the imitative in an equal, degree to the European. The negro is not without talents, but they are limited to imitation, the learning of what has been previously known. He has neither invention nor judgment. Africans may be considered docile, but few of them are judicious, and thus in mental qualities we are disposed to see a certain analogy with the apes, whose imitative powers are proverbial. (14)

An Alabaman, Dr. Josiah Nott, popularized these ideas through the 1850's, publishing his *Types of Mankind* with Gliddon in 1854. This book was a compendium of information, including unpublished papers on ethnography by Morton and a full chapter by Agassiz. By the end of the

turn of the century, *Types* would go through nine editions. According to Smedley, "This was perhaps the single most important book to set the issue of race into a peculiarly scientific context for the general public" and "was used by students and laypersons alike as a major source of descriptive, statistical and other quantitative data on the different kinds of human beings. . . it succeeded in backing with the awesome prestige of science what were actually folk views of the nineteenth century" (234).

Nott and Gliddon's studies and lectures directly impacted politics as well as academics. In the introduction, Nott recounts a story about John Calhoun who, after being confronted by anti-slavery leaders in Britain during a diplomatic mission, turned to Gliddon for help. Rather than finding any new data, "he soon perceived that the conclusions which he had long before drawn from history, and from his personal observations in America, on the Anglo-Saxon, Celtic, Teutonic, French, Spanish, Negro, and Indian races, were entirely corroborated by the plain teachings of modern science" (50). This included, of course, general claims about morality, intelligence, and the naturally debased, simian-like quality of the slaves.

Nott spent a great deal of time studying "hybrids" as well. It was his opinion that "mulattoes are the shortest-lived of any class of the human race" (375). They are unhealthy, possess less intelligence than whites, are "bad breeders" and "bad nurses," and their children die young (373). Additionally, he had trouble collecting enough data to even make his claims about the children of "hybrids" because "the difficulty arises solely from the want of chastity among mulatto women, which is so notorious as to be proverbial" (398). This charge of promiscuity had become an important part of the emerging stereotype. Burmeister, who spends a great deal of time "studying" a "mixed race" servant of his landlord, places this stereotype within the abolitionist debate the year before Nott.

In Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, R. J. Halderman argued that Africans have never added anything of value to humanity in the history of mankind. He states:

But from none of these did the black race absorb learning or the arts. It left no trace behind it in works beneficial to the human family. . . . If we cast our gaze to the south [of Africa], we shall behold at least fifty millions of negroes sunk in the profoundest ignorance and

barbarism, inhabiting their own home in the same condition they were when they had the best opportunity of receiving civilization from India, from China, from Asia, from Asia Minor, or from Egypt (6).

After congress passed an act guaranteeing the rights of African-Americans to vote, an organization in New York argued that this should not be done until the freed slaves could demonstrate that they were intelligent enough to actually take part in the democratic process. Their pamphlet stated that:

we should most strenuously object to any project of these theorizers which contemplated the admission of the baboon, the gorilla, the chimpanzee, or any of the kindred races, to an equality of privileges, in anticipation of their future theoretical exaltation, and before, passing through the intermediate state of their superior African brother, they had arrived at the condition of the fully developed Caucasian. Let the theory be first fully tested before we grasp at its results. Let the proper degree of intellectual progress be attained before its consequences are secured. (3)

At the end of the century not figure was more prominent in the continuation of racial science tradition. Francis Galton was a jack-of-all-trades in the British scientific community. He was interested in criminology, twins studies, mental abnormalities, and, above all, race. A cousin of Darwin, he wanted to prove that genius runs in families. Additionally, he wanted to prove that there is definitely a hierarchy among the supposed races of man. In 1869's *Hereditary Genius*, Galton, barely able to contain his disgust and contempt states that:

The number among the negroes of those whom we should call half-witted men is very large. Every book alluding to negro servants in America is full of instances. I myself was much impressed by this fact during my travels in Africa. The mistakes the Negroes made in their own matters were so childish, stupid, and simpleton-like, as frequently to make me ashamed of my own species. (328).

Even with *Finger Prints in* 1893, where Galton popularizes/originates the use of fingerprints in criminology, Galton cannot hide his hope that racial differences would be visible on the fingerprint as well:

The impressions from Negroes betray the general clumsiness of their fingers, but their patterns are not, so far as I can find, different from those of others, they are not simpler as judged either by their contours or by the number of origins, embranchments, islands, and enclosures contained in them. Still, whether it be from pure fancy on my part, or from the way in which they were printed, the general aspect of the Negro print strikes me as characteristic. (196)

The history of the period of reconstruction, when racial science was experiencing a renaissance in its application to the struggle by U.S. whites to justify discrimination at all costs, was popularized in *Birth of a Nation*. This film, especially in its reception, brings together racial science and public policy in the beginning of the twentieth century.

D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* premiered at the Liberty Theater on March 3, 1915. *Birth*, based on *The Clansman* by Rev. Thomas Dixon, depicts Reconstruction as a time of suffering for white citizens. The "heroes" of *Birth* protects home, hearth and white womanhood against "savage" freed slaves. In essence, Griffith provides a narrative within which the whites' oppression of blacks is

depicted as the necessary response to a corrupt system of government that no longer represented or protected those citizens that should naturally be placed in positions of power.

Griffith believed that his childhood provided him with a hierarchy that he would celebrate on screen. Griffith's earliest memory was of his father bullying a freed slave following reconstruction with his cavalry sword. Because he had given Griffith's brother a bad haircut, Griffith's father approached him and "drawing the sword, he went through the technical cuts and thrusts and slashes, threatening the darkey all the time with being cut up into mincemeat." Griffith's father, a "Little Colonel" like the future hero of *Birth*, winked at Griffith to let him know this was a "joke." Griffith states "that sword remains the first memory I have of existence. (Geduld 14)

Even more troublingly, this echoes sentiments found in President Wilson's *History of the American People*, where Wilson makes the same attribution of humor as the impetus behind the first Klan activity. Wilson states that "It threw the Negroes into a very ecstasy of panic to see these sheeted 'Ku Klux' move near them in the shrouded night; and their comic fear stimulated the lads who excited it to many



an extravagant prank and mummery" (60). Griffith's memory of the south proved to be so close to Wilson's that he used several quotations drawn from the President's history for transitional elements between the first and second parts of *Birth*. These passages from Wilson's text that pop up on screen warn that Northerners came "to cozen, beguile, and use the Negroes" the infantilized blacks and that the North had attempted to "put the white South under the heel of the black South." Because of this, of course, "white men were roused by mere instinct of self-preservation. . . until at last there had sprung into existence a great Ku Klux Klan, a veritable empire of the South."

Griffith's affection for Wilson's work was requited, as well. *Birth* became the first film in the history of the United States to be shown at the White House on February 15, 1915, one month before its official premier, when Wilson and his cabinet saw it. The next evening, Griffith was able to show the picture to all the members of the Supreme Court, members of Congress and their families (Silva 56).

Griffith makes sure that the audience knows precisely what is at stake in the struggle in the second half of the film: white womanhood and the sanctity of the white

family. The second half of *Birth* depicts the most obvious and outrageous examples of racial supremacy in conjunction with an idolization of white womanhood and family. The action of this portion of the film centers around the activities of the Cameron family as they attempt to dominate and control their area of South Carolina, where Griffith's "Little Colonel" Ben Cameron founds the Klan. After the quotations from Wilson's text, we are immediately shown a carpetbagger who promises marriage as one of the reforms that would be enacted with black support.

Before any acts of racial violence appear on screen, Griffith introduces the audience to the 1871 South Carolina State Legislature, this is a period in which freedmen gained power, to serve as a background for the Klan. This places the action of the film in the same year that the Ku Klux Klan Acts would be most successfully enforced. President Grant had signed these acts into law in 1870, guaranteeing every citizen equal protection under the law with a federal guarantee. In 1871 the horrors of Klan activity grew to such a level that federal troops were dispatched to nine counties in South Carolina, and dozens of Klan members were arrested, some of whom turned states evidence against the Klan. It was this history of open

Klan activity that Griffith was trying to justify. Within a few years, however, all of the strength of the Civil Rights reforms were removed, virtually ending when federal troops were withdrawn in the compromise following the much disputed Hayes election. In *Birth*, however, the national political and structural complicity in the decision to abandon Southern blacks is eclipsed by the heroics of the Klan as they provide the final victory for the South on screen in their triumph over the renegade soldiers.

This heroics is "proven" in the film as Griffith presents white womanhood that is directly threatened by the new freedoms gained by the slaves during Reconstruction. Silas Lynch, newly-elected lieutenant governor of South Carolina and the "mulatto" right-hand man of the Radical Reconstructionist Stoneman, abducts Stoneman's own daughter, Elsie, and tries to make her marry him. He cannot control himself in the face of white womanhood. Flora, the sister of film's hero, Colonel Cameron, is driven to her death when fleeing from Gus, a renegade black Union soldier who works for Lynch. Overall, as freed slaves gain more power, things get more chaotic, and white families are shown to be more oppressed. Union soldiers siege the Camerons at a cabin. Families, unprotected

against the violence, can only look on in horror from their windows as freed slaves riot in the streets. The men are impotent as their wives swoon somewhere nearby.

Thus, Griffith attempts to justify racial violence by utilizing womanhood and family as a vehicle for supremacist ideology. The Klan abducts, tries and executes Gus and leave him on Silas Lynch's doorstep with a "KKK" signed note. Eventually, they charge into town on horseback to retake control and re-institute order. Once in power, they parade through town with the women they have managed to protect as the families that had looked out of their windows with fear now cheer the Klan. Ominously, Griffith makes the physical threat at the next election into a cause for humor and celebration. Armed Klansmen sit on horseback behind African American men at voting places, who puff their cheeks and gape in horror, demonstrating that "ecstasy of panic" Woodrow Wilson's Southern boys found so amusing and that Griffith assumed Northern audiences would laugh at as well. According to Griffith, those that worked on *Birth* "show many of the phases of the question and we do pay particular attention to those faithful Negroes who stayed with their former masters and were ready to give up their lives to protect their white friends" (78). These

freedmen revert easily back into "faithful Negroes" after Northern agitation is removed. For Griffith, apparently, this was just another of the many unproblematic "phases" of the question.

The NAACP responded to showings with the belief that the movie would lead to more lynching and make negative stereotypes of blacks even more powerful and easily referenced as authority in white culture. What was entertainment for Griffith was a matter of, literally, life and death for many African Americans across the country. The control of representations of African Americans became an immediate focus in the NAACP's struggle against *Birth*.

Outside of *Birth's* Chicago premier, for example, they presented the Jeffries-Johnson fight film, which showed Jack Johnson beating Jim Jeffries to become the first African American to become the world heavyweight boxing champion. This image functioned as an immediate antidote to the belief that whites were in some sense physically superior and that blacks were naturally docile and servile in the face of white masculinity fairly and effectively applied. The simple display of the film was an act of resistance in itself, since the interstate transport of fight films had been deemed illegal after the Sims Act

passed in 1912 (Steible 192-93). As one southern supporter of the Act argued, "no man descended from the old Saxon race can look upon that kind of contest without abhorrence" (qtd. in Streible 192-193). The NAACP tried to have the Federal Government impose this logic in regards to *Birth*, but they were unsuccessful.

Until 1918, the NAACP tried to get the film suppressed on the grounds that it hurt the war effort by vilifying African Americans. If whites took these images seriously, the ability of black soldiers to function in America and overseas would be compromised. In an interview Griffith noted that, before he began production on *Birth*, he "was strongly advised that this would not the time for a picture on the American Revolution, because the English and their sympathizers would not take kindly to the part the English played in the War of the American Revolution" (Silva 59). In an interview after its premier, referencing African American opposition to his film, Griffith remarked that "these people revel in objections. There could be no story of the American Revolution. . . . Those of English descent would protest, and so on down the line with all nationalities and all grades of people. It would be impossible to present anything" (Silva 99). Ironically,

the British audience was being protected. Despite the fact that in California, for example, Robert Goldstein had been sentenced to ten years in jail for releasing a film, *The Spirit of '76*, that violated the Espionage Act because it vilified British soldiers, the same logic was not applied to Griffith (Peterson 92-93). The reverse was not always the case, however. After the Houston riots, where a few African Americans soldiers actually *did* resist Jim-Crow laws and were lynched because of it, Ida Wells protested in Chicago by passing out buttons as a statement against the lynching. White authorities used the Espionage Act to try to make her stop—her buttons, they claimed, were anti-government. (Wells 368-369).

The NAACP also attempted to raise enough money to produce their own film, and actually gained the support of the Universal Film Company. Universal's support did not extend, however, to include covering all the costs—they wanted \$10,000 from the NAACP. They were unable to raise it. They were able, however, to raise enough money for one thing, the production *Rachel*. It was in this atmosphere that Angelina Grimké maneuvered to find room to speak. In *Rachel*, lynching and white supremacy are shown to be invaders of the African American household, robbing the

protagonist of the potential for a domestic life and convincing her that she should not have children. In this play, Grimké mobilizes the same myths of family and home in an act of resistance, highlighting white hypocrisy and combating the representation of black savagery by recasting the white "heroes" as the true villains. Her play was an act of visual resistance.

In an attempt to show the kind of people that were opposing his film, Griffith inquired, "if you desire to espouse the cause of a society which openly boasts in its official organ, *The Crisis*, that it has been able to throttle 'anti-intermarriage legislation' in over ten states? Do you know what this society means by 'anti-intermarriage legislation'? It means that they successfully opposed bills which were framed to prohibit the marriage of Negroes to whites" (Silva 79). Angelina's father, Archibald, was born in South Carolina, the son of a slave and her owner, Henry Grimké. Archibald Grimké lived in Charleston until he was 16, when he moved to the North for a better future. During reconstruction, around the time of violence surrounding the enforcement of the Klan Acts, the Grimké sisters recognized publicly that Archibald was their half brother.



Early on, Grimké has Rachel state that "I think the loveliest thing of all the lovely things in this world is just . . . Being a mother" (134). Her mother, troubled by Rachel's naïve attitude, tells her daughter why they she and her brother Tom live in a single parent home. Her father, it turns out, was lynched for writing an anti-lynching article in a newspaper, as was her brother George who tried to defend him. The mother notes that she, and by extension Rachel, do not have access to the same categories of valuation that exist in a white society. The position of "mother" and "family" may overlap, but the ability to invade the black household is a demonstration that even those state that they teke these categories seriously in the white community cannot see the value in an "othered" household. Mrs. Loving states, "yes—by Christian people—in a Christian land. We found out afterwards they were all church members in good standing—the best people" (145). They had broken into the home in the middle of the night, taking both the father and the son, reversing the images of black assaults on white families in Griffith.

Grimké does not let her audience disassociate themselves from this racism by imagining the North as any more free in any legitimate sense. Rachel indicates the

national scope of the problem by, after hearing about her father's murder, stating "We sing this song at school, I believe, about 'The land of free in the home of the brave.' What an amusing nation it is" (131). Rachel, then, accesses the shared realm of national identity directly through her speech. Grimké's use of this level of the national is not simply a devaluation and disposal of nationalism, but a mobilization of those aspects of a national identity that are gendered by the dominant class and denied to the subaltern. Tom, Rachel's brother, states "I'm an electrical engineer--and I've tried steadily for months--to practice my profession. It seems our educations aren't of much use to us: we are not allowed to make good--because our skins are dark" (160) and further "In the South, they make it as impossible as they can for us to get an education. We're hemmed in on all sides. Our one safeguard--the ballot--in most states, is taken away already, or is being taken away. . . . In the north, they make a pretense of liberality: they give us the ballot and a good education, and then--snuff us out" (167). He attempts to fulfill the role of provider and protector that is traditionally defined as the male role, but because of a racial supremacist ideology, he and his family are denied

full access to the benefits his labor could provide. This is not a failure of the gender specific ideal, but a failure of a system to allow the articulation of that ideal because of the imposition of a racial filter that denies blacks the ability to take this ideology as seriously as is exemplified through texts like that produced by Griffith. Throughout the play, Rachel is courted by Mr. Strong, a man whose last name calls up a gendered category of valuation as the compliment to Rachel's last name, "Loving." He is a college graduate and the man who describes his own situation in the north as one of simple survival. He states "I'm an artist, now, in my proper sphere. The tip me well, extremely well--the larger the tip, the more pleased they are with me. Because of me, in their own eyes, they're philanthropists. Amusing isn't it? I can stand their attitude now" (164). His one solace is the fact that life is not *really* that long if one really thinks about it. Rachel's eventual rejection of the "strong" compliment to her "loving" self is a reflection of the impossibility, in Grimké's expression of the situation, of an African American household that can be protected from terrorism.

After hearing how a little boy she's caring for has been taunted by other children in the neighborhood because of race, she grows more depressed. And finally, after hearing that another child is moving into the neighborhood in order to escape a neighborhood where she was being taught that she should be ashamed of who she is because of her skin color, Rachel breaks down. This dilemma of identity is the foundation from which Angelina Weld Grimké created her character Rachel. Rachel, making sure that the audience knows specifically that they are to blame: she refuses marriage on the basis that she will not choose to bring any other person into the world who will be taught to hate themselves and to be hemmed in by racism. She states "If I kill, You Mighty God, I kill at once—I do not torture" (181). Her words have a double impact—she chooses not to have children, which Rachel sees as her natural duty, thereby killing any child she might have. She also kills the person that she could become, a mother, the person she assumed her audience would associate with themselves most deeply.

At the same time that Grimké was struggling to counter lynch law and Griffith's popularization of white violence, the scientific respectability of racial science

was undergoing a rebirth. In the first few decades of the twentieth century, the eugenicist movement, inheritor of nineteenth century prejudices, was ready to provide justification for discrimination. Before long, the Pioneer Fund, the premier American supporter of eugenics would be founded.

In 1916, "Madison Grant, a New York aristocrat and promoter of the American Eugenics Society, published *The Passing of the Great Race*, setting out such a hierarchy. The preface was written by Henry F. Osborn, the director of the American Museum of Natural History, who warned of the gradual demise of the white race." (Stefancic and Delgado 35). Two decades later, "when Wickliffe Draper established the Pioneer Fund's endowment in 1937 and appointed Harry Laughlin president, he also appointed four other directors, including Frederick Osborn, nephew of Henry Osborn and secretary of the American Eugenics Society" (37).

Laughlin was a very active racist. In 1922 he wrote "the Model Eugenic Sterilization Law, adopted by nearly thirty states, under which tens of thousands of persons accused of feeble-mindedness were forcibly sterilized" (35). In 1924 when one such case was appealed to the Supreme Court, Laughlin, who had not met or examined the

appellant, gave an opinion for the court that contributed to a decision against the appellant (36). In the same year Congress enacted the National Origins Quota. Laughlin was on the scene, and "testified in favor, reporting that the IQ studies showed that 83 percent of Jews are feeble minded and urging that Jewish immigration be sharply curtailed."

(35). According to Richard Lynn, official historian of the Pioneer fund, "at this time, many Americans began to feel concerned about the large numbers of these new immigrants. Some of them believed they would cause cultural problems because of the difficulties of assimilating so many peoples of different ethnic backgrounds into a common culture."

Challenging the assumption that anything could be amiss in such a fear, Lynn states that while "some questioned the average intelligence of these new immigrants as well" that was not the sole reason for the new law. "Mark Snyderman and Richard Herrnstein [co-author of *The Bell Curve*] examined over 600 pages of recorded debate in Congress and found that the intelligence issue was brought up once" (26-27).

Laughlin was popular overseas as well. Hitler liked him, and he liked Hitler back. Stefancic and Delgado state that Laughlin's law caught the attention of Nazi leaders,

who passed similar laws resulting in the sterilization of more than two million people. In 1936, the university of Heidelberg conferred an honorary degree on Laughlin, who called the Nazi sterilization program "a most exciting experiment." Shortly thereafter, Laughlin suggested that Adolf Hitler be made an honorary member of the Eugenics Research Association (36). In 1958, Harry Weyher, a detractor of the *Brown* decision, was appointed president of the fund (37).

Over the next few decades, the Pioneer Fund supported a number of controversial scholars. These scholars, similar to Galton, are interested in criminology, twins studies, mental abnormalities, and again, above all, race. Definitely a hierarchy among the supposed races of man. Arthur Jensen "declared that programs such as Head Start are useless because they can do little to raise the IQ levels of poverty-level black children. The article was based on his previous work in which he argued that blacks may be genetically inferior to whites, possessing an average IQ fifteen points lower" (Stefancic and Delgado 38). Linda Gottfredson's "work on race and intelligence was cited by the National Alliance, a white supremacist group, in its bid to get AT&T to drop its affirmative

action policies" (41). And J. Philippe wrote a book that, hearkening back to the halcyon days of the mid nineteenth century, "divides races into three subsets he calls Mongoloids, Caucasoids, and Negroids" (41). Finally, Richard Lynn, the author currently most closely associated with the Pioneer Fund following his hagiography of racists past, is "out-and-out believer in eugenics that believes that the world is burdened by inferior peoples who should be 'phased out'" (42).

Lynn believes that the tide is turning. The kind of research along with the kind of conclusions that he prefers are coming back into repute. He writes that "a harbinger that the intellectual tide has started to turn" as evidenced by "the front page review of three books—Pioneer-supported Itzkoff's *The Decline of Intelligence in America*, Pioneer-supported Rushton's *Race, Evolution and Behavior*, and Herrnstein and Murray's *The Bell Curve* (which made extensive reference to Pioneer-funded research)" (540). The first edition of the NAS's *Academic Questions* must have been one of those harbingers that Lynn was reflecting upon.

Scatamburlo states that NAS began long before the publication of *Academic Question* with Campus Coalition for Democracy. This organization was "founded in 1982 with



some help from the IEA and the Committee for the Free World, a right-wing organization directed by Midge Dector (the wife of neoconservative guru Narmhan Podhoretz and a board member of the Heritage Foundation)" (62). Six years later, at the annual meeting of NAS proper, "Herbert London, co-founder of NAS and dean at New York University . . . railed against the inclusion of literature by women and non-whites in the core curriculum, because 'it does not lead us toward our humanity'" followed by Alan Kors who "denounced racial awareness programs as attempts at 'thought control' and urged members to 'use ridicule against blacks, feminists, and gays'—remarks that most of the audience, comprised of older men in tweed jackets, a few women, and a single black cheered" (125).

NAS spawned two organizations that would have an additional impact upon academic culture. Following Lamar Alexander's suggestion in 1992 that there might be room for an alternative accrediting institution that would not examine diversity requirements, NAS founded the American Academy for Liberal Education (Scatamburlo 126). Additionally, NAS members helped form the National Alumni Foundation in order to directly impact finances of those

institutions that are doing work counter to their judgments (127).

In the opening salvo of the opening volume of *Academic Questions*, "A Call to the Academy," Herbert London states that "The defense of academic freedom, on which there was consensus and on which the foundation of liberal thought rests, has become a defense for intolerant positions and those hostile to free inquiry. While ideologues do not dominate academic institutions, they have been catapulted into prominence through the protective embrace of academic freedom itself" (3). London is angry because the people who he has disagreements with tend to criticize him. As proof, he argues that "to object to a feminist position is *ipso facto* evidence of 'sexism'; to challenge democratization of rights is proof of 'classism'; to contest homosexuality as another form of normalcy is to be labeled 'homophobic'" (3). It is up to the mighty champions of academia's pristine ecology to come to its defense against those barbarians at the gates. In his estimation, someone needs to defend Academia from the onslaught of these barbarians (4).

In this first edition of *Academic Quarterly*, Lawrence Mead offered a defense of Charles Murray and Michael Levin

authors a piece that critiqued affirmative action. Mead writes that Murray's "*Loosing Ground* marks a sea change in the style of research and argument about poverty. Since academic influence has been so great in this field, that intellectual achievement is as important as any influence that Murray has had on policy" (23). Murray forced supporters of anti-poverty legislation to question their work, which is to Mead a very positive thing (24). The genius of Murray's work, however, is not in his marshalling of statistics. It is in Murray's style and philosophical scope. Mead states that "whatever else it is, *Loosing Ground* is powerfully written. It is clear, forceful, and accessible to ordinary readers" (25). It moves beyond the boundaries of traditional sociology to offer input on the theoretical problems of even attempting to intervene in social problems. The solution is personal responsibility. Mead argues that "Murray thinks society is fair and blames government. The main reason he wants to change the 'rules of the game' is not to save government money. It is to hold individuals accountable for their conduct" (28). The most important aspect of Murray's work is, however, the style. He writes for a non-specialist audience, the lay reader. According to Mead, echoing Horsman, Murray's work

"stands in that venerable Anglo-Saxon tradition of moderate individualism stretching back to the American founders" (26).

Lynn would be proud of that defense. Herrnstein and Murray are within the orbit of racial scientists that Lynn catalogs. In describing the work of Audrey Shuey, the "first person to undertake a comprehensive investigation of all the studies that had been carried out on differences in intelligence between blacks and whites in the United States," Lynn connects her to Herrnstein (92). In reference to socioeconomic status she attempted to prove that "intelligence determines social status and that the social classes are to some degree segregated genetically on the basis of intelligence" he states that this matched that "asserted by R. A. Fisher, and later by Richard Herrnstein, and Arthur Jensen" (102). In covering the work of Ernest van den Haag who "[discussed] the possibility of genetic differences between blacks and whites" and "defended intelligence testing as a valid technology for the measurement of genetic differences" (176). van den Haag liked the Bell Curve, and "endorsed [Herrnstein and Murray's] argument that intelligence is important for job success and that there are significant race differences in

intelligence. However, he believes they overstated the case for the social importance of intelligence. He suggests that unintelligent youths can attain success as baseball players or as singers of pop songs, while unintelligent girls can become models" (177).

The Pioneer Fund's connection is even more closely associated with Levin's article. "The connection between philosophy and its surrounding culture has always been obscure," states Levin. The connections include "material prosperity (a culture must be able to support a large cadre of thinkers who do nothing but think about impractical matters), international trade (for the intellectual ferment of ideas in collision), a fascination with science, and a tradition of individual liberty." In addition, concurrent with Lynne Cheney's call, "also required, it seems, is some inward intangible that might be called 'national temper': the world's philosophy has been produced, in essence, by Greeks, Britons, Germans and Rene Descartes" (16). Those that challenge U.S. capitalist development, though, are doing a great disservice to the citizenry. He writes that "affirmative action inflicts two major blows on society: it unjustly penalizes the innocent by disadvantaging them

relative to individuals they have not harmed, and it attacks the meritocratic basis of democracy" (21).

According to Scatamburlo, Levin "subsequently made headlines in the early 1990s with his public announcements about the genetic inferiority of Blacks" and that "Black students in New York should ride in separate, police-supervised subway cars" (64). In his study *The Funding of Scientific Racism*, William Tucker surveys the long history of the intellectual establishment's commitment to an oppressive racial order, Tucker devotes a good deal of space to the Pioneer Fund and those that gravitate towards its influence. In reference to Levin, long associated with the unapologetically pro-eugenics journal *American Renaissance*, Tucker state that "Levin does not mince words, 'It is a matter of verifiable fact,' he declared at one conference, 'that the influence of whites dominates mankind' " and that "on all the important criteria for evaluating a society's accomplishments, he continued, 'whites come out on top.'" Additionally at "another [*American Renaissance*] meeting that segregated schools in the South 'were far superior to any educational institution ever created by a black society' and that in comparison 'Jim Crow was a *stimulating* environment." Most troublingly

of all, in one edition of *American Renaissance*, Levin "stated bluntly that 'whites are *right*' to discriminate against blacks because 'the average black is . . . not as good a person as the average white'" (187-88). In Lynn's laudatory description of Levin's career, he gives Levin compliments for making "another novel point in regarding the differences between blacks and whites in athletic abilities." The perceived superiority of African Americans in physical activity, to Lynn, is actually due to evolution (402-403). In other areas, Lynn compliments him for naturalizing economic disparities by saying white folks are better at saving (404). Additionally, Lynn connects Levin's research to his own. He writes that "Levin proposes an evolutionary theory to explain race differences in impulsiveness and associated characteristics. He begins by adopting Lynn's theory that cold environments of Europe and Asia were more cognitively demanding than the tropical and semi-tropical environments of Africa" (405). Coming full circle, Lynn and Levin argue that Linné and Buffon, lo so many years ago, was right.

Carol Iannone is another figure connected to the debate in an important way. In that opening issue, Carol Iannone wrote an article titled "Feminist Follies."

Essentially, Iannone wants readers to know that feminists are not as good at academic pursuits as she is. She states that at the 1986 MLA convention she was "greeted by a parade of reversals, contradictions, and downright absurdities, some of them acutely embarrassing" (45). In further editions of *Academic Quarterly*, she continues to point out the stupidity of feminists, but also moves on to point out how stupid other groups are as well. In "Diversity and the Abolition of Learning," President George W. Bush gets a pillorying for his support of any kind of affirmative action. She writes that "alas, diversity is far advanced. But perhaps it is not too late. Through continued exposure of the sheer ugliness of this project, we may gradually rouse the opposition" (48). In a continuation of that argument, Iannone lets her readership know both how troublesome but how boring dealing with "diversiphiles" is. She states that these folks' agenda "goes far beyond attaining proportional representation of racial and ethnic groups in the college population as well, although this is clearly one of the goals" and that "diversiphiles make no secret of this endeavor and their growing success in realizing it" (9). Tediously for her, however, diversiphiles pretend that what they are doing is



"both radically new and yet only the latest in a series of historical developments in the American university" (11). Its neither, really, as it turns out. Just the same old breaking down of that good tradition thing.

Not surprisingly, given our examination of Daniel Patrick Moynihan's connection with the racist logic associated with *The Bell Curve* and the original attempts to destroy the limited (and already racist and sexist) welfare legislation, Moynihan came to Iannone's defense in the pages of *Academic Questions* after she was rejected by congress as the head of the NEH. He believes that critics who have challenged him should not doubt his motivation. In reference, he states "I recall a passage of Hannah Arendt in which she writes of the tactic of the totalitarian elites in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s of turning every statement of fact into a question of motive" and that he needs to "express my disappointment on behalf of Dr. Iannone and melancholy acknowledgement of the further intellectual decline of the Democratic Party. I almost said demise, but will leave bad enough alone" (61). As a politician, he understands what it is like to be shunned, an experience he felt as a supporter of John F. Kennedy. "But all hell broke out over the nomination of

John F. Kennedy for president in 1960," he writes, "Kennedy was a Catholic; Kennedy was a conservative" (64). In 2002, Stanley Rothman, S. M. Lipset, and Neil Nevitte let readers of *American Quarterly* know that there was not much mass support for affirmative action, so the damage that they perceive it doing is going to stop under public pressure. They state that "overall there is a tendency on campus to reject a system of preferences, which is especially strong among students." (64) Moreover a "significant minority believed that the policies have lowered academic standards" (64). In 2004, an author fantasized about the overturn of affirmative action policy in 2013. As justification for his fantasy, Prindle states that the "lack of 'diversity' in universities is not the result of ethnic discrimination. It is the consequence of the fact that higher percentages of the members of some ethnic groups are more academically qualified than the members of others." (2)

Many contributors justify their own existence as bourgeois academics through a celebration of their own identities, an act that ends up being quite exclusionary. According to Fred Baumann, "the contemporary version of anti-bourgeois moralizing fails with particularly comic

aplomb because it plays right into those bourgeois tracts that it seeks to overcome" (56). The bourgeois have a double consciousness, part self-loathing and part self-interested. Educators need to understand that these students need to study themselves first, and that self is coterminous with whiteness. He states that "the most edifying education that middle class Americans can receive it seems to me, is the one that is the least overtly edifying, the least concerned to hector them or remake them" (57). To study "others" is only to see the self. He states that "adding Fanon to the canon in no way rescues students from the grasp of Dead White European Males; it merely adds a couple of outfits to the great historical fashion show to go with, say, the guitar of the sixties and the briefcase of the eighties" (57). After they know white culture enough, these students might or could be "willing to expend the cost in time and energy, study a non-Western culture in a serious way, learning the language, taking account of the good as seriously as they were forced to take Aristotle or Augustine" (58). This conclusion is in agreement with Walter Berns, John M. Olin Professor Emeritus at Georgetown University, argument in defence of bourgeois culture. He states that "in 1776, we laid the

foundation of a regime that would secure our unalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. What we did with these rights was up to us; more to the point" (24). The free market was the thing that guaranteed this, of course. He states that "to repeat: guided by the new political philosophy, we established a commercial republic, peaceful and prosperous, and peaceful, in part, because it was prosperous" (25).

London's opening article attempted to argue that culture needs to be defended because of discrimination against conservatives in "PC" policies and actions that limit academic freedom. Looking through the volumes of the journal rapidly demonstrates that while they want to ensure their own positions, they do not see how getting rid of a few leftists in the name of academic freedom is contradictory. This became especially apparent following September 11. According to William A. Galston in a 2002 article, patriotism is like being friends. He states that "in the same way that friendship embodies a presumption to think well of one's friend, patriotism presumes a settled disposition to think well of one's country. That does not mean suspending one's critical judgment or withholding criticism; it does mean giving one's country the benefit of

the doubt, exploring benign interpretations of controversial policies before concluding that more malign views are correct" (32). Patriotism like this gets complicated for him quickly, though. People that fought against their own governments, as long as these governments were of the godless commie kind, were still likely patriotic. He writes that "during the Soviet period there were numerous individuals quietly reading the Federalist papers in Moscow libraries and research institutes who came to reject Communism in part on the basis of their inquiry. Precisely because they wanted better for their country, they came to favor a fundamental regime change. I'm loath to say that these Russians somehow ceased to be patriots" (34). But it is probably unpatriotic for people to challenge George W. Bush's war on Iraq, at least from the perspective of 2002. He states that "it seems tolerably clear that the elimination of Saddam Hussein's regime would serve our interests, not to mention our friends and allies and perhaps the entire world. So patriots are instinctively inclined to support President Bush's apparent decision to remove Saddam from power" but they could think about not doing so at the same time (34). As for the Iraqis, I'm not sure what opinion Galston might have of

their resistance to the U.S. forces. They might be patriotic for fighting, but it would be unpatriotic to privilege their patriotism before our own patriotism. Our patriotism trumps, I suppose, as was the case with the Soviets.

While some of the articles are dismissive of the left, others are more confrontational. The members of NAS know a few things for sure: (1) their beliefs typify what is American, (2) some people in academia think they are wrong, so (3) these people are in conflict with American values. In 2000, John Foote was explicit in his estimation of the un-Americanness of left academics, and that their insistence that they represent America is a cunning new ploy. He argues that "the academy is unwittingly fulfilling the role of the modern prince outlined by Antonio Gramsci, one of the leading Hegelian Marxist thinkers of the twentieth century" (50). Just as London had described in the first issue of the journal, Foote argues that there is an adversarial culture in the academy (50). These new intellectuals are attempting to tap into patriotism by suggesting that America's original promise has not been fulfilled. For Foote, the most representative of these seems to be Todd Gitlin, who "emphasizes the

'provisional and unfinished quality' of America's political culture" (50). Foote urges a rejection of those like Gitlin, though. He knows folks like that should be rejected because of the Founding Fathers, a monolithic body that agreed on everything, especially on their opinion of everything that Foote would might have an opinion on. He writes that "nothing could be further from the anti-utopian realism of Madison and the Founders than the contemporary left's utopian beliefs in the perfectibility of man and society" (52). These anti-American academics yearn for a "the transformation of America into a truly multicultural or transnational regime" where, horror of horrors, "there is no fixed standard to which newcomers should assimilate" (52).

In 2003, Candace de Russy did not mince any words in her description of the current evil. She states that "the new enemy—today's terrorist networks and the regimes that support them—is unencumbered by fixed borders and conventional forces" and that these enemies are the "self-styled oppressed or those who claim to be fighting on behalf of the oppressed" (55). They "grow in power as their bases of intellectual support grow. And of all the institutions of society, it is our college and university

campuses where the ground is most fertile for building such support. Degenerate academic thought not only breeds the extremists themselves, but also worms its way into the mass mind" (56). The degenerates are influential. Their "renunciation of an American identity—indeed of Western civilization itself—clearly are heard throughout the world" (56). At the heart of the evil is multiculturalism—ideological multiculturalism. She writes that "multiculturalism originally promoted tolerance and respect for non-Westerner cultures. It held that the West was not the apogee of human achievement but simply one of many equally worthy cultures. But this essential relativism has been seized and manipulated by campus radicals" (57). This multiculturalism is like an infection, spreading and killing all that is good in the world and supporting what is bad. Because of it, de Russy believes authorities were unable prepare adequately for September 11. Additionally, authorities are unable to react strongly enough now because of it (58). The response, obvious to the readership, is to get rid of the enemies by getting rid of any money that would flow to what they disagree with (60).

While left academics are at least indirectly responsible for terrorism, those who utilize extremist



language in the pages are unable to see the ways in which their words, a strong extension of centuries old chauvinism and bigotry, could result in any form of violence. In reprint of a speech, NAS member Eugene Genovese rallies the forces that defend tradition in a way that depends upon militant language of this kind. He states that "the struggle to clean up our campuses is scoring impressive victories, for which we owe an inestimable debt to such outstanding leaders as Lynne Cheney, Alan Kors, Jerry Martin, and our own Steven Balch" (16). Readers need to learn the lesson that the tough and valiant NAS forbearers have to offer them. "You do not put down campus hooligans—terrorists, really—by appeals to nonexistent legal protection; nor by letters to the *New York Times* and the prostituted media it epitomizes; nor by protests to administrators who go with the flow and would sell their mommas for cash money; nor by reliance on colleagues who are quaking in their boots" (19). What do you do? Look to the Weathermen. Genovese states that "the Weathermen set out to force people to choose sides on a terrain on which there would be no place to hide. And they raised a magnificent slogan, which, I respectfully suggest, we make

our own and put to better use: 'Dare to struggle! Dare to win!'" (20).

Unlike democrats who are struggling to maintain the center by distancing themselves from the far left, conservatives are less worried about dividing themselves from those radical elements that might be associated with their cause. It is hard to imagine the reaction of an NAS member in hearing a member of a left organization recuperating the Weathermen so directly. Actually, it isn't. Edward Alexander of the University of Washington wrote a letter to the editor of *Academic Quarterly* arguing that Gayatri Spivak not only wrote impenetrable prose but also represented an "evil impulse" in her desire to understand the motivation behind terrorist acts, which he brought "to the attention" of "Spivak's employers at Columbia" (8). Lynne Cheney, in that 1991 article, argued "What is taught is important, but how it is taught is as well. If we teach students to read only so they can unmask racism or sexism or imperialism, we diminish their experiences." (13). She celebrates the work done by a student at the University of Minnesota who was trying to provide a corrective to canon expansion. This student, Michael Handberg, "is well aware of the importance of

academic freedom and departmental autonomy; nevertheless, he writes, 'If a department welsches on what I feel is the responsibility to its undergraduate students to teach a pluralistic curriculum, then I think outside sources have a legitimate interest to stick their noses into places that normally they wouldn't belong'" (13). Cheney provides the best antidote to the illusion that the folks at NAS care any more about academic freedom than they do race, class or gender. A document prepared by Jerry L. Martin and Anne D. Neal for the American Council of Trustees and Alumni in February of 2002 begins with a quotation by Cheney that states "at a time of national crisis, I think that it is particularly apparent that we need to encourage the study of our past" (coverpage). The Council itself believes that "moral relativism has become a staple of academic life in this country. At the same time, it has become commonplace to suggest that Western civilization is the primary source of the world's ills" (5). Following 9-11, academic institutions responded inappropriately. The authors state that "Instead of ensuring that students understand the unique contributions of America and Western civilization—the civilization under attack—universities are rushing to add courses on Islamic and Asian cultures" (6). This was

part of the culture the authors call "BLAME AMERICA FIRST." They believe that by putting these courses in the catalog, "those institutions reinforced the mindset that it was America—and America's failure to understand Islam—that were to blame" (7). It is never the fault of those who know that they are Americans and that anything that is not them is not American. Thus, the never have to take personal responsibility for anything negative done by their nation. That is simply not American to even suggest. American history is what these anointed beings say it is. Terror is what they say it is too.

This philosophy is mirrored in U.S. government. In *Congressional Quarterly*, Justin Rood points out that, even in this era where every element of policy is filtered through the post-9-11 lens, the "draft planning document" released in March of 2005 by the Department of Homeland Security "does not list right-wing domestic terrorists and terrorist groups." Those left wing groups that have done property damage "such as the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) and the Earth Liberation Front (ELF)." But not those groups like right wing "anti-government groups, white supremacists and other radical right-wing movements, which have staged numerous terrorist attacks that have killed

scores of Americans." These include, for example, "The conspirators behind the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, which killed 168 people and wounded more than 500" who "were inspired by radical right-wing movements." Also not included are those that target abortion clinics like Eric Rudolph, "a member of the radical anti-abortion group Army of God" who was involved in an "abortion-clinic bombing that killed a police officer and seriously maimed a nurse" (Rood Online). This ideology has a long history, as we have seen here. Because of the fact that it is allowed to remain invisible, understanding this ideology's genealogy is an important political task. Similarly, it is also important to understand that immense amounts of money have been freed to support it through think-tanks and foundations. It continues to exist, and is reflected throughout academia, business and government.

**Chapter Seven**  
***Longtime Suffering: Victims, Veterans and Vietnam***

In *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, James Loewen examines several history textbooks popular in schools and colleges throughout the country in order to provide a corrective to the kind of blind patriotism and dissembling that is found in places like *Academic Questions*. When approaching the Vietnam era, Loewen bemoans the lack of knowledge that new undergraduates have concerning the history of this time. He does not believe that this lack of knowledge is completely the fault of the students, since their knowledge of the event comes either from the history texts he finds so deficient or, more likely, from popular cultural documents that provide an even more ridiculous depiction of the war. The last generation of students to leave high school with the war as part of their civic memories, according to Loewen graduated in 1983. Commenting on this situation, Loewen states that "The war is unknown territory to today's college undergraduates, who were not alive when it ended. . . Movies, novels, songs, and other elements of popular culture do treat the recent past, but these fuse fact and fiction, as any *Rambo* fan can attest" (241). In an echo of Loewen's example, George Lipsitz, in a chapter in *Possessive Investment in Whiteness* titled "Whiteness and

War," uses *Rambo* as a telling example of the problems that Loewen has highlighted. In 1985, a group of veterans of the conflict were picketing a showing of *Rambo, First Blood: Part II* because they felt it glorified and simplified the war. A group of teenagers too young, as Loewen has suggested, to have the war as part of their civic memory, taunted and threw stones at them, jeering that Stalone was the true veteran, despite the fact that Stalone was conveniently out of the country working as a security guard at a Swiss school during the Vietnam War (79).

The correspondence between the problem outlined by Loewen with the example provided by Lipsitz is no accident. By examining the ways in which neoconservative rearticulation of the meaning of the Vietnam War combines with the construction of Vietnam in *Rumor of War*, *Platoon*, and *Apocalypse Now*, the correspondence between the political use of Vietnam and the popular depiction of the conflict can be seen as part of a larger political formation. In each of these works, the historicity of the conflict itself is subordinated beneath the vision of a "greater" mythological trek in which a protagonist leaves the realm of the rational in order to bring back some

personal gnosis. This gnosis redeems the individual within the narrative as it reflects back upon the larger culture within which the narrative was framed. Thus, the mythology of the West benefits from an ideological resolution that portrays a trans-historical quest complicit with cultural violence, a complicity that envisions the war as necessary in order for this knowledge to be gained. Donald Whaley's introductory essay in an issue of a journal dedicated to films about the War in Vietnam epitomizes this approach to the War. He states that, "the Vietnam War made it necessary for Hollywood to create a new kind of war movie." Pointing to the journal he is introducing, Whaley argues that the articles tend to "suggest that to tell the story of the Vietnam War Hollywood turned to a different formula—the story of the mythological journey" (169). Unfortunately, like many critics, Whaley accepts the universality of the central characters in these films at face value, a universality that yokes the actual conflict of a foreign people with a colonial power to an internal conflict within Western myth that guarantees the redemption of a Western ideology as it casts the "other" in a permanent supporting role. As part of a larger political formation, the focus on the individual's ability or



inability to transcend conflict and to bring back a special kind of gnosis for American society provides a double function. As an escape into ideology, it covers up the material consequences of political and military oppression abroad as it covers up economic and racial oppression at home.

In neoconservative discourse, the war in Vietnam provides a rallying point for rearticulation. As white folks were recast as victims of reverse discrimination, the actual relations of power within the war were recast so that the Western aggressor becomes the ultimate victim. In the process, the asymmetric impact of the war in Vietnam is subsumed beneath a rhetoric that efficiently recasts American vets as the truly suffering victims of a truly noble cause. The more devastating impact of U.S. aggression in Southeast Asia, on the other hand, is not even allowed within the confines of the debate. In *Rethinking Camelot*, Noam Chomsky points to this absurdity of the U.S. occupying the victim's position along with the consequences this has had on the meaning of the war in Vietnam, stating that

the Indochina wars have not been completely erased from historical memory. From the horrifying record,

one issue still remains: our suffering at the hands of the Vietnamese barbarians, who, after attacking us in South Vietnam when we were nobly defending it from its own population, compounded their crimes by refusing to dedicate themselves with sufficient zeal to accounting for the remains of the American pilots they had viciously blasted from the skies over Vietnam and Laos. (27)

So the veteran suffered in the war and continues to suffer and re-suffer at home. In this incitement to sympathy for the veterans, little space is left for the voices of the "barbarians" in Vietnam who refuse to sufficiently admit their guilt. Chomsky, noting this absence, marvels at the effectiveness of this deployment of victim-hood. In *Rogue States*, Chomsky covers the history of American anti-civilian bombing in the wars of the twentieth century, arguing that American atrocities in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos are nothing new—they are just more egregious examples of the same kind of violence the U.S. military has perpetrated in the past. Looking at the use of anti-civilian bombing campaigns in World War II, Chomsky states that "the specific targeting of civilians continued after World War II, but with care to ensure they would be

defenseless and could not retaliate. The most extreme example is the war in Indochina." (164). While in Indochina, though, the U.S. was ostensibly bound by international agreements that should have limited U.S. ability to create the terror that military and foreign policy eventually produced. But, asserting the U.S. role as the ultimate rogue state, Chomsky states that "the US did undermine the Geneva agreements—it set up a rather typical Latin American-style terror state in the South and killed about 70,000 South Vietnamese by 1960. But the harsh repression elicited resistance" (165).

In demonizing the resistance to U.S. sponsored terror during and after the conflict, the context of resistance, the historical legacy of colonial forays into the area, and the result of U.S. military policy disappear. The suffering vet, however, is highlighted. Chomsky states that "we left a horrifying legacy: perhaps 4 million killed in Indochina and many millions more orphaned, maimed, and made into refugees, three countries devastated—not just Vietnam" (169). But these dead are as faceless as the combatants that American soldiers face in the field in Hollywood interpretations. They are not important. In approaching the ongoing toll that the conflict has had on

vets because of chemical weapons, Chomsky addresses the reader directly, stating that "you know about Agent Orange and dioxin and their effect on US soldiers; that did receive coverage. Of course, however much they were affected, that's not a fraction of the effect on Vietnamese, and that receives virtually no attention, though there is occasionally some" (169).

As the neocoservative rhetoric emphasized the victimhood of American G.I.s in Southeast Asia, atrocities and oppression abroad were not the only thing concealed. Within the U.S., the reshaping of Vietnam into a metaphor for working and middle class oppression also concealed the disempowerment workers felt at home by reframing the disillusionment many were experiencing in the new economy. George Lipsitz argues that "perhaps evocations of Vietnam have been designed less to address that conflict and its legacy than to encourage Americans to view *all* subsequent problems in U.S. society exclusively through the lens of the Vietnam War." Economics, he urges, are among those "problems" that are now viewed through this lens. New patriots, calling on America to understand the suffering of the vet is a reflection of suffering at home, are able to hide "the consequences of deindustrialization and economic

restructuring, the demise of whole communities and their institutions, and the social and moral bankruptcy of a market economy that promotes materialism, greed, and selfishness, that makes every effort to assure the freedom and mobility of capital while relegating human beings to ever more limited life chances and opportunities" (82).

Visiting and revisiting the war in Vietnam is less an exercise aimed at healing than at mobilizing resentment around issues of tradition versus decay, anti-statist "freedom" versus state over-involvement. Popular depictions of Vietnam veterans' experience "transmit anxieties about social decay through metaphors about threats to the bodies of heterosexual white males, who appear as put-upon victims, and present an economic and social crisis as an unnatural disruption of racial and gender expectations" (83). By utilizing the failure of the U.S. in Vietnam as a metaphor for U.S. domestic policy run amok, neoconservatives were successful in redirecting scrutiny against those policies that combated structural inequality at home under the guise of freedom from inefficient, ineffective intellectual elites. The new patriotism "makes a decidedly class-based appeal to resentments rooted in the ways that the working class

unfairly shouldered the burdens of the war in Vietnam and has unfairly shouldered the burdens of deindustrialization and economic restructuring since" (85). During the 1970s, the kinds of jobs and life choices that workers could expect were changing for the worse. Lipsitz states that this era is characterized by "systematic disinvestment in U.S. cities and manufacturing establishments [that] forced millions of people to suffer declines in earning and purchasing power, to lose control over the nature, purpose, and pace of their work, wreaking havoc in their lives as citizens and family members" (84). In the "postindustrial economy," the jobs that became increasingly available were primarily "sales and service jobs with much lower wages, benefits, and opportunities for advancement than the jobs they replaced" (84). When the vets returned home, of course, many of them took part in protests and strikes in response to many aspects of U.S. policies at home and abroad. This, however, is not part of the image that can easily be associated with a veteran of that war because, just as the rhetoric removes the history of the colonial resistance in Vietnam, it must depoliticize and dehistoricize the experience of the veteran at home. Left leaning vets were "far less useful to the interests of the

new patriots than their role as marchers in parades and as symbols of unrewarded male heroism" (86).

This unrewarded and unrecognized male heroism is the central trope of Philip Caputo's *Rumor of War*. Caputo begins his book by letting the reader know exactly how he is defining the experience of war and its consequences within his narrative. He states that "this book does not pretend to be history. It has nothing to do with politics, power, strategy, influence, national interests, or foreign policy; nor is it an indictment of the great men who led us into Indochina and whose mistakes were paid for with the blood of some quite ordinary men" (xiii). While he asserts that politics is not part of his agenda, he does believe that he is creating a story that can help correct the record by providing an example of what an infantryman in the battlefield was actually experiencing. For Caputo, this description of "actual" experience can finally put to rest certain pernicious misconceptions about the atrocities committed during the conflict that critics of the war have used. He states that the "two most popularly held explanations for outrages like My Lai have been the racist theory" and the "frontier-heritage theory, which claims [the soldier] was inherently violent and needed only the

excuse of war to vent his homicidal instincts" (xviii). For Caputo, neither of these interpretations is sufficient because they deny the specific experience of the infantryman and that, despite its similarity with the frontier-heritage thesis, soldiers were simply too far removed from the vestiges of civilization to be expected to be able to control themselves. He points out that "there was nothing out where we were, no churches, no police, no laws, no newspapers, or any of the restraining influences without which the earth's population of virtuous people would be reduced by ninety-five percent" (xx).

For Caputo, the war atrocities are not unfortunate outcomes of the specific conflict; conflict necessitates these atrocities. Americans who rally against the war are not doing so for political reasons, despite what they might say. They are fearful of what the American soldier represents, which is the possibility that they are not so dissimilar to any other American at home. Caputo, reacting to criticisms of the atrocities committed during the conflict, states "that may be why Americans reacted with such horror to the disclosures of U.S. atrocities while ignoring those of the other side: the American soldier was a reflection of themselves" (xxi). Caputo effectively



distances his own responsibility for his actions as he distances any political responsibility in the same maneuver. While "evil" might not be inherent in men, it is inherent in a conflict that removes these "men" beyond the boundaries of society and thus beyond the boundaries of social propriety. In so doing, he removes from his narrative any possibility of addressing the political dimension of U.S. activities in Vietnam by focusing on what impact the activities had on the internal world of the soldier. The world of the Vietnamese, external to his admittedly history-less tale, is not the focus because it is not important given the emphasis placed on the individual soldier who is victimized by both sides of the conflict and who experiences, ultimately, a kind of moral death and rebirth.

Throughout his narrative, Caputo toys with several concepts of colonial expansion that serve to demonstrate his own youthful naiveté. Before embarking to Vietnam in order to rebel against his middle class, suburban upbringing, Caputo describes fantasies that he had during his childhood in which he imagined the ability to reenact the heroics of America's past. Recalling adventures around a boyhood haunt, he states that "I would dream of that

savage, heroic time and wish I had lived then, before America became a land of salesmen and shopping center" (5). Vietnam, for Caputo, is a wilderness free from the constraints of his suburban upbringing. It is, as he often describes in vivid detail interspersed throughout his narrative, a complete wilderness. Again ironically playing off of his own inability to see the pointlessness of his actions in Vietnam, Caputo often makes reference to colonial history in a similar vein. He states that "it was a peculiar period in Vietnam, with something of the flavor of Kipling's colonial wars" (66). Later on, he recalls hearing a fellow soldier talk pretentiously about fear and bravery while he was "trying to read the paperback Kipling which lies open in my lap" (97). The references to these images, however, are completely internalized as part of his own cycle of growth in Vietnam. The references to a heroic past have reference only to his coming to understand his inability to access this type of heroism, not to the impact that this imagined heroism had on colonized people. He wants access to the transhistorical position of the colonizer, the master of the realm, but is unable to gain it.

At the end of his work, Caputo directly addresses the internality of his own personal war. When talking about the infantryman's desire to fight face to face, Caputo states that "this inner, emotional war produces a tension almost sexual in its intensity" (294). A few pages later, Caputo uses this image, this naturalized depiction of the desire for violence, to justify his platoons destruction of a village. He states that "then it happened. The platoon exploded. It was a collective emotional detonation of men who had been pushed to the extremity of endurance. I lost control of them and even myself" (304). But it was a sexual dynamic. It was internal. The actual impact is secondary to the understanding that it gives us of the "stresses" placed on the individual within the conflict.

Caputo, when he is eventually placed on trial for the murder of two Vietnamese civilians, similarly maneuvers to cast blame back in a wide, amorphous way in order to displace personal responsibility for his actions. He states that "the war in general and U.S. military policies in particular were ultimately to blame for the deaths of Le Duc and Le Dung" (330). Further, he manages to extend the judgment that might arise from his own case to American society as a whole. He argues that "if the charges were

proved, it would prove no one was guaranteed immunity against the moral bacteria spawned by the war. If such cruelty existed in ordinary men like us, then it logically existed in the others, and they would have to face the truth that they, too, harbored the capacity for evil" (331). The meaning of this evil, and the ability to fix its meaning, are the gifts Caputo, and by extension the U.S., gains for his suffering.

In his postscript, Caputo integrates the structure of his narrative within the domain of the kinds of neoconservative rhetoric that was actively reinventing the meaning of Vietnam in order to avoid dealing with domestic problems that centered around race and class. In Caputo's estimation, it is only those who experience this kind of evil who can explain it for those who have not had the privilege of going through that crucible. He argues that "it was the role of battle singers, who sang their verses around the warriors' guttering fires, to wring order and meaning out of the chaotic clash of arms." For the U.S., the value of his struggle should be seen in the way that he understands evil in a mode inaccessible to the critics who did not have an authentic, first hand experience. Caputo can transcend. He states that "I tried to give meaning by

turning myself into a kind of Everyman, my experiences into a microcosm of the whole." Intellectuals have failed and "it is left to the artist to try to make sense of it" (335). And America really needs to understand this bit of gnosis. Caputo states that "people didn't want to know about the tumults of the warrior's heart, to hear the cries that came howling straight out of the heart of darkness, the belly of the beast" and that, while "the war was fought by the children of the slums, of farmers, mechanics, and construction workers. The debate was waged by elites" (349). America did not want to look at itself because it had become disunited. The policies of those who would critique Vietnam are indicative of what has made America fail. He states that "America today is balkanized by 'groupthink,' as if the fissures that opened up during the upheavals of the '60s. . . have spread and spiderwebbed, so that now the great American tribe is split into subtribes." No groups rights, no structural or institutional readjustments, no historical oppression—just the lone warrior-priest-poet letting the public in on the meaning of the war and the meaning of American society in its wake.

Stone is all too willing to take up the mantle of the warrior-priest-poet in the creation of *Platoon*. Despite the fact that at the film's release he stated that he wanted to create a movie that dispenses with ideology in order to get at the six inches in front of the viewers' face, Stone has a particular view of what film should or could provide. In his 1997 commencement address at Berkeley, Stone stated that "This is what I think; I might be presumptuous, but this is what I think movies are for in our culture, or at least what movies should aspire to. A coming together of *our* tribe" (Stone Online). Additionally, he states that on returning from the war, "I couldn't find that kind of spirituality in this country, except, oddly enough, in the American Indian cultures where I've been able to travel with some friends over the last few years. With the Sioux up north in South Dakota, and the Navajo and Hopi tribes down in the Southwest. It's been a very eye-opening experience for me to attend a sun dance, for example." Stone's Taylor, who functions as a mouthpiece for Stone's own experience in Vietnam, transcends race and class in the construction of a narrative whose teleological endpoint results in a

celebration of the individual's triumph over circumstances in a congruent manner to Caputo's narrative persona.

In the director's voice over to the movie, when Taylor returns to camp after a firefight, Stone, conflating his experience with his character's, states, that this is "where I get to know people better." During this scene, after cleaning out the latrines, Taylor takes some time to comment on the population of the infantry and his decision to volunteer for the draft. Stone states that this was an attempt to tell the story of the working class warriors, the "bottom of the barrel" as Taylor describes them. Captain Dale Dye, the technical and military adviser who provides an additional voice over available on the DVD of *Platoon*, states that this is "one of the more personal scenes in which Oliver spoke for himself." Dye and Stone had many conversations about this, the fact that, as Stone states, most people who went into infantry were poor draftees. Dye appreciates the inclusion, since he himself is a volunteer as Stone was, but in this statement, this depiction of himself, Stone has managed to place himself in a position, despite the fact that he was a middle class child who went to Yale until he wanted to have some adventure abroad, where he can speak on behalf of the

"bottom of the barrel." Moreover, especially in this scene, Stone also places himself in a position from which he can speak across racial divisions as well.

From the latrine duty, the soldiers move on to rest and relaxation in two bunkers. The platoon is divided between the followers of Barnes, the evil soldier, and the followers of Elias, the good soldier. There is no significant racial tension among the soldiers, even among the soldiers of the "evil" Barnes camp. Dye, in his voice over, states that this is one of the best things to come from the war, this "juxtaposition" of people. He states that "Vietnam puts them together side by side...which is one of the great things about service in Vietnam." And while they are side by side, Taylor proves to be the vindicating hero. At every opportunity, Taylor manages to out-soldier the African American members of his platoon, who serve as either comic foils, metonymically signify the "bottom" of Taylor's world's "barrel," or survive because of Taylor's courage and compassion.

In one of the movie's most compelling scenes, the platoon enters a village and commits a series of violent actions that, in the voice over, Stone compares to a mini My Lai. Dye, in reference to this scene, states that at



times like this "you get so angry all of the humanity goes out of you." The soldiers, especially Bunny, represent "the mad, mad part of youth" and that this is "what American youth can become." They are not responsible, Dye argues, because this is "what war will do to you." "I've reached that point," he continues, "I know Oliver has too." Indeed, Stone admits that the content of the scene in which Taylor shoots at a disabled Vietnamese man's foot is taken from a similar situation in which Stone had had "enough" and started shooting at an elderly man's feet. Stone didn't kill him, but he can remember that his platoon mate, also called Bunny in his recounting of the tale, clubbed someone to death in a manner similar to how Bunny kills the disabled man in the movie. The scene moves outside of the hut where Barnes shoots and kills a woman who refuses to cooperate. For Dye, this exemplifies the "confusing aspect of the war." Soldiers did not know who to trust or when to trust them. Stone, in his voice over, admits to the same, stating that his platoon would kill villagers at "random" depending on the soldiers' "moods." Sometimes they would give them food or joke with them. Other times, especially if they ran away, they would shoot them. In this scene, Stone, as Caputo did, references not responsibility or

culpability, but pressures from the atmosphere itself. It was hot in Vietnam and in that "heat and intensity," "people get nuts."

In the end, however, the story is ultimately about Taylor himself, and the internal struggle he took part in, a war "between two fathers." Vietnam was not about the Vietnamese, it was about an eternal conflict between good and evil. Taylor, as he is being airlifted away, states that "we did not fight the enemy. We fought ourselves." Stone, echoing his characters point in his voice over, states "there is no enemy. The enemy is in you." Vietnam was outside of history, and Taylor's discovery of the correct path, the decision to choose the good killer over the bad killer, validates his experience as well as the experience of the war itself.

The function of the descent into this internal heart of darkness Caputo describes is most fully explored in *Apocalypse Now*. Coppola, in an attempt to provide as many mythological allusions as possible, manages to avoid the history of the conflict as he subordinates the context of the war beneath the "greater" context of a war within myth. In critical approaches to this film, the Christian allegorical structure of *Apocalypse Now* has most often been

eclipsed by the allegorical structure connected with the regenerative myths described in James Frazer's *Golden Bough* and Jessie Weston's *From Ritual to Romance*, two works that we are introduced to in the film in Kurtz's as the camera slowly pans over them. The Christian elements of the film, however, provide Coppola with the opportunity to highlight the breakdown of a portion of Western society, which he depicts through the interplay of Christian symbolism.

In "Coppola's Conrad: The Repetition of Complicity," Garret Stewart explores these parallels. Kilgore is the first "demonic" presence that Willard comes in contact with, a figure he describes as having a "weird kind of light" around him, as though it is a halo of protection. He does the bidding of the government here in the war, however, thus must be associated with the Christian God himself, an association made explicit at the end of the movie when the command unit attempting to contact Willard refers to itself as "Almighty." The center of the Christian-symbolic structure is rotten, however. Kilgore enacts the same, irrational level of violence on the Vietnamese people in order to surf and have a beach party that Kurtz is reputed to be enacting in the jungles of Cambodia. Kurtz became an important figure in the war

originally after he organized and led the air assault "archangel." Kurtz, in this conception, can be seen as a Satanic figure who has fallen because of his failure to follow the will of the "Almighty." Indeed, as Stewart points out, the command unit tells Willard when he is initially assigned to assassinate Kurtz that he is "one of those men whose dark sides have usurped the 'better angels of our nature.'" Kurtz association is further reinforced by the satanic imagery at his compound, where perversions of Christian religious imagery are numerous. Kurtz, though, is a creation of a system that is as corrupted as himself, which motivates Stewart to state that Coppola's repetition of debased Christian icons signals that, as the crew enters the fortress, they are "moving back beyond the Christian myth, defunct and desecrated to more primitive communions and sacrifices" (460-61).

The characters, then, get to occupy a space in which they test the "modern" mythological context of Christianity, of which they are the stars, and then get to retreat further into the history of myth by occupying center stage in the "primitive" pre-Christian roots of myth in Coppola's deployment of themes offered up by Frazer and Weston. Frazer's work was an attempt to portray central

elements in "primitive" pre-Christian religious systems throughout the entire globe. The concept of regenerative, vegetative myth through the cycle of incarnation in a god-king is, in Frazer's estimation, central to all the religions that he explores. Frazer's work has had a profound influence over the generations following its first appearance, including a fundamental ethnic chauvinism that simultaneously romanticizes and demonizes primitive communities. In his introduction, Frazer states that he hopes "after this explicit disclaimer I shall no longer be taxed with embracing a system of mythology which I look upon not as merely false but as preposterous and absurd" (vii). Indeed, this ethnocentrism appears with a hefty amount of exoticizing on the back of the 1996 edition that I am using here. Hoping to attract a readership, no doubt, the editors state that Frazer's work

describes our ancestors' primitive methods of worship, sex practice, strange rituals and festivals. Disproving the popular thought that primitive life was simple, this monumental survey shows that savage man was enmeshed in a tangle of magic, taboos, and superstitions. Revealed is the evolution of man from savagery to

civilization, from the modification of his weird and often bloodthirsty customs to the entry of lasting moral, ethical, and spiritual values.

Ronald Bougue argues that the "natives" worship of Kurtz "stem from a logically consistent religious beliefs which Sir James Frazer elucidates in *The Golden Bough*" (620). In Frazer's description of the cycle of regeneration, he discusses the role of the god-king, a tribal ruler that experiences a ritual death and rebirth in the incarnation of the tribal ruler that succeeds and/or kills him.

Linking Frazer's cycle to the location within the film, Cambodia, Bogue points out that Frazer describes such a ritual as part of the local culture, where a god-king is killed because he has become too sick or weak. Frazer locates this culture "in the dim depths of the tropical forest" (194), and states that the worship of the god-king includes the ritual slaughter of animals, including buffalo, a ritual graphically depicted in the film. He states that these kings "are not allowed to die a natural death," so, if they cannot recover, they are stabbed to death" (125).

This expression of an eastern-based tribal ritual is not expressed without its western analog, which is provided

in the other book in Kurtz's den, Weston's *From Ritual to Romance*. Bogue quotes Weston, who states that "the object of the Quest is the restoration to health and vigor of a King suffering from infirmity caused by wounds, sickness, or old age. . . . and whose infirmity, for some mysterious reason, reacts disastrously upon his kingdom, either depriving it of vegetation, or exposing it to the ravages of war" (621). The combination of the two mythic systems within the movie results in a resolution where Kurtz, the old god-king, is replaced by Willard, the new god-king, the cycle of vegetative myth and replacement whom the natives worship after the old king has been destroyed. Thus, in the symbolic economy of the film, Kurtz and Willard manage to travel back through a mythologized time, in a narrative arc that imagines a linear path that allows the character to go back through (modern)Christianity to the (primitive)pre-Christian cycle of death and rebirth. This construction of a mythological history creates a space in which the actual history of the conflict can be displaced by the centrality of the West, which gets to dominate both the modern and primitive poles of the system as Willard and Kurtz vie for dominance in each system. The actual inhabitants of South East Asia, however, do not matter as

much as the resolution between the mythological systems inherent within the crucible of the war that will burn the West down to its most powerful, but still Western, elements. The West can transcend specific history in order to reach a mythological resolution that conserves the power of the West by focusing on the impact of its transcendence upon itself.

Caputo, Stone and Coppola all attempt to provide a narrative that denies the history of the Vietnam War by focusing on an internal dilemma within the protagonist who struggles to make sense of his experience. In struggling to make sense of the war, the suffering of the veteran in Vietnam and his rejection at home can never be healed. It was never about healing. The suffering of the veteran and the critique of the society that rejects him serves a narcissistic function for American society as it does within the narratives themselves. It is always already about us. America and Americans are the stars. The consequences of Vietnam for the Vietnamese are secondary to their inability to sufficiently satiate America's desire for complete spiritual reparation. The spiritual renewal that Caputo, Stone and Coppola attempt to provide supplies an ideological escape from dealing with more tangible



oppressions. The ongoing suffering of the veteran at home serves as a displacement for the material consequences social programs that neoconservative and neoliberal administrations are all too ready to gut and of economic transformation that create a suffering that cannot be foisted on an evil "other." Rather, narratives like these provide evidence that it is the burden of the suffering, the put upon America, to pick itself up by the bootstraps and keep on fighting for the goodness that is inherent in the promise of American dreams.

## **Chapter Eight: *Crusading for Capital***

The assumption that those who challenge U.S. imperialism translates directly into support for the Islamicists that were behind the attacks on the World Trade centers and the Pentagon is something that Tariq Ali takes on in *The Clash of Fundamentalisms*. Ali grew up as an atheist. He respects Islamic thought and Islamic history, but he tries to show a popular audience how it is possible to have a nuanced view of September 11 that includes a critique of capitalism and imperial history. He states that "Capitalism has created a single market, but without erasing the distinction between the two worlds that face each other across a divide . . . Most of the twentieth century witnessed several attempts to transcend this division through a process of revolutions, wars of national liberation and a combination of both" (3). To folks that disagree with this proposition out of a strong commitment to careless nationalism, this is unacceptable. Ali writes that "for the Americophiles, no criticism of the Empire matters that is not conducted within the framework of loyalty" because "what they dislike the most is to be reminded of the sour smell of history" (283).

For Ali, the conflict is a clash between different histories that lie behind what he calls "Islamicist" fundamentalism and imperial fundamentalism—a relationship that has been mutually sustaining under capitalism. For others, the impulse to historicize conflict is not a pursuit of an understanding but the pursuit of justification. In 1993, Samuel P. Huntington, the "one-time counter-insurgency expert for the Johnson administration in Vietnam and later director of the Institute of Strategic Studies at Harvard University," wrote an article where he attempts to refute arguments that history had come to an end with the dominance of liberal democracy (*Clash* 299). In Huntington's article, the fundamental divisions between civilizations are very similar to what racial scientists had argued for centuries, and Huntington's conclusion is as immutable as their conclusions about racial difference. Clash between cultures is inevitable and must be accepted by rational citizens.

Huntington begins his article by stating that "identity will be increasingly important in the future, and the world will be shaped in large measure by the

interactions among seven or eight major civilizations. These include Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American and possibly African civilization" (25). As Hegel rebukes Africa as a continent outside of history, so follows Huntington. Conflicts had been between princes and nobility, then, following the Peace of Westphalia, it had been between different peoples. Then, following World War I and the rise of communism, war was waged on the basis of ideology. Now, with the ascendancy of the U.S. as the only global power, with its hegemony of liberal democracy, the true, underlying differences represented by culture will be the cause of war. He writes that "as a result of the Russian Revolution and the reaction against it, the conflict of nations yielded to the conflict of ideologies, first among communism, fascism-Nazism and liberal democracy, and then between communism and liberal democracy" (23). Economics falls away as a category that is relevant in determining which groups of peoples might be angry at what other groups of people. Huntington states that "it is far more meaningful now to group countries not in terms of their political or economic systems or in terms of their level of economic development but rather in terms of their culture

and civilization" (23). He goes on to describe centuries old rivalries with culture as a backdrop—the thousand plus years of antipathy between Islam and Christian nations, the conflict between Islam and Hindus, the Slavs against the Turks, China against everybody in the Far East (23-35). The United States might be divided by Europe, he lets us know, but not so divided as the United States is divided with Japan. He writes that "here cultural difference exacerbates economic conflict. People on each side allege racism on the other, but at least on the American side the antipathies are not racial but cultural" (35).

But how is that cultural attitude that is associated with America to be defined? What are its general characteristics? For Huntington, it is implied that whatever exists now as dominant within each of those cultures he defines is that which epitomizes different cultures. In accepting a monolithic depiction of disparate and elements, intracultural conflict is disallowed. Where do I, a communist and an atheist American fit in? I oppose, as does Tariq Ali, the fascisizing influences within each of the fundamentalisms that Ali describes. If civilization is to be defended in the same sense as classified by the "Defending Civilization" report created

by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, then a number of positions taken by citizens in any given community is beyond the restricted definition of culture that are forbidden.

Additionally, the utilization of a transhistoric culture is unable to account for changes in disposition within culture as previously marginal elements become more powerful if not dominant. In reference to American culture, Melani McAlister examines how the interpretation of events in the Middle East as well as challenges to American imperialism combined in the 1970s to empower a minority movement into dominance.

McAllister states that "in May 1967, the escalating tensions between Egypt and Israel eclipsed public concern about Vietnam, at least for a while. In the Situation Room in the White House, the map of Vietnam was replaced with a map of the Middle East" (156). The success of the Israeli military proved to be much more effective in the conflict than the American military in Vietnam. A juxtaposition between the U.S. and Israeli military campaigns was inevitable (157). For McAllister, the production of a small millennialist pamphlet aimed at a lay audience written by Hal Lindsey was the single most important

document in understanding the transformation. Lindsey, "a relative unknown who had graduated from Dallas Theological Seminary and then toured the country as a lecturer for Campus Crusade for Christ" listed political events in the Middle East as evidence of the coming rapture. He states that "'first, the Jewish nation would be reborn in the land of Palestine. Secondly, the Jews would repossess Old Jerusalem and the sacred sites. Thirdly, they would rebuild their ancient temple of worship upon its historic site'" (167).

In an environment in which U.S. foreign and domestic policies were being challenged, with the growth of military losses abroad and militant countercultural movements at home, the pamphlet hit a note with a certain segment of the population that wanted proof of their righteousness in the world. Israel's victory was seen as the victory of a tradition the U.S. evangelicals could claim association with, as they were taking part in an epic struggle between good and evil and were proved to be on the correct side this time. McAllister states that "Christian evangelicals interpreted the events as evidence of the quickening pace of God's action in human history. Lindsey argued that the

1967 war proved the final wae of Armageddon would likely be triggered by Arab-Israeli conflict" (170).

As the subculture grew, so too did their access to media outlets for additional growth. Jerry Falwell, a preacher who was to create one of the most successful fiefdoms in the empire of evangelicals, "had begun broadcasting on local radio within a week of the founding of the Thomas Road Baptist Church in 1956; by 1967 he was producing the weekly *Old Time Gospel Hour*; in 1971, he was buying time on two hundred television stations around the country" (171). Throughout the 1970s, direct mailing coupled with these televised religious programming grew and grew. McAllister states that "by 1977, paid programs accounted for 92 percent of all religious airtime, as opposed to 53 percent in 1959" (171). During that decade, Jimmy Carter was elected president and was himself a declared evangelical. McAllister states that "*Newsweek* magazine declared the Year of the Evangelical, commenting on 'the most significant—and overlooked—religious phenomenon of the 1970s: the emergence of evangelical Christianity into a position of respect and power'" (172).

Following Carter, the religious Right moved into a closer alliance with the Republican Party. Pat Robertson's



bid for the presidency, for which he claimed divine support and inspiration, indicated the growing importance within conservative movements for including religious oriented messages in order to expand the base. This is not to imply that those that eventually sought and won the presidency were not true believers. McAllister states that "Reagan asked one colleague at the table if he had ever read Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39. When the colleague assured Reagan that he had, the governor, who had read and 'repeatedly discussed' [Lindsey's book] in the previous year with other associated, launched into a passionate lecture, insisting that, with the founding of Israel and the development of nuclear weapons, the stage for the final battle was being set" (177). But Reagan and those that followed him had faith in another system as supplement to evangelic doctrine. While America claims to be embattled by a specific kind of fundamentalism, it is important to look at those kinds of fundamentalisms that have grown in power here.

In *Clash of Fundamentalisms*, Ali demonstrates a conflict of views within Islamic cultures that are viewed from the imperial west as a monolith. He states that as a student, he and his friends enjoyed asking other students

questions that would conflict with their assumptions about Islam and about socialism. He writes "In the clandestine quiz we sometimes organized in the university canteen to shock the less political of our peers, a much-favoured double-barrelled question was posed thus: 'Which is the largest Muslim country in the world? Answer: Indonesia. Which is the largest communist party outside the communist world? Answer: the PKI—the Communist Party of Indonesia'" (345). In the same years that evangelicals were celebrating Israeli victories in one part of the world, 1967, Western powers were conspiring to destroy a very non-fundamentalist and progressive regime in Indonesia.

In 1966, when Suharto overthrew Achmed Sukarno, he did so with U.S. support. Sukarno, a reformer who, following the overthrow of Dutch colonialism, had attempted to create a coalition government that included many on the left. One of the most notable accomplishments of his early rule was the calling together of the peoples of Asia and Africa following decolonization. The Bandung Principles are displayed on the Savoy Hotel where the famed conference took place:

- 1 Respect for fundamental human rights and the principles of the United Nations Charter

- 2 Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations.
- 3 The recognition of the equality of all peoples.
- 4 Settlements of disputes by peaceful means (*New Rulers of the World* 31)

The announcement of the conference held there reverberated across the world. Richard Wright, in an understudied volume titled *The Color Curtain*, describes his visiting of that conference and the expectation and excitement he felt because of what such a conference meant to him "I was staring at a news item that baffled me. I bent forward and read the item a second time. *Twenty-nine free and independent nations of Asia and Africa are meeting in Bandung to discuss 'racialism and colonialism'* (11). It was a meeting of "the despised, the insulted, the hurt, the dispossessed—in short, the underdogs of the human race were meeting" (12).

He asked those folks in his peer group their reactions as he prepared to go. The common assertion was that this was a communist plot, despite the fact that the organizing nations were not communist (16). China had been invited, and even in the speech delivered at the conference, argued that it would respect the non-alignment of any country.

China just wanted them to respect its alignment. Additionally, the idea of reverse discrimination reared its head in these initial conversations. "But is not this Asian-African Conference merely racism in reverse" asks a one friend (16). He asks a "young, conservative but fiery Dutch girl" who states that "The Communists have agitated them so much that they are 'Dutch crazy'"—a term coined by the Dutch colonialists to describe the Indonesian's desire, after three hundred and fifty years of colonization, to want to control their own country and to expel the Dutch. Wright is, by the time of his writing, no communist sympathizer. He is suspicious of China's role, but sees that the power of the conference lies in much more than just a possible consolidation of China's power in the region. It is a possibility for things to begin anew, for those that have been crushed underfoot to align themselves together. There is fear in his writing, too, and he wonders, sympathizing with his white friends, if the reaction to imperialism might end up being a bloodbath in which the polarities of power are reversed but the outcome is the same. In the end, Wright ends up sympathizing with the West despite himself. He wonders "Is this secular, rational base of thought and feeling in the Western world

broad enough to interfere sans narrow selfish political motives?" His answer is "Yes" (219). Wright wants the elites of the West to join with the elites of other nations to form a new peaceful order for the world because he fears the irrationality of racism and religion. Eleven years after the conference, the West had returned with its version of rationality. Sukarno had to be overthrown and a pro-capitalist regime would be put in its place.

John Pilger, in *The New Rulers of the World*, exposes U. S. involvement in the coup as well as how global capitalism enjoyed the fruits of the conflict. He writes that "having already armed and equipped much of the army, Washington secretly supplied Suharto's troops with a field communications network as the killings got under way" (32). The United State's representative on the ground had been an effective operative elsewhere. Pilger states that "the American Ambassador in Jakarta was Marshall Green, known in the State Department as 'the coupmaster'" because of his involvement in an attempted coup in Korea. Notably, "when the killings got under way in Indonesia, manuals on student organizing, written in Korean and English, were distributed by the US embassy" (33). Additionally, "at the height of the bloodbath, Green assured General Suharto: 'The US is

generally sympathetic with and admiring what the army is doing' " (33). In the international press the coup was not reviewed to positively, but in the American press it was viewed as an economic boon (35). The coup was nothing if not horrifying, brutal and hundreds and hundreds of thousands of citizens were killed with U.S. support, which included U.S. backed death squads killed tens of thousands (39). Suharto had used the conflict with the PKI as the reason for the coup, and during and following the coup communist party members were slaughtered. The British Ambassador to Britain had a conflict with the Ambassador from Sweden who had challenged his figure of 400,000 dead as far to low. The Ambassador, who had helped with the propaganda war that initiated the conflict, admitted that the figures were likely two low. Many had been killed, communiststs in particular. After recounting the fact that members of a "Communist union" had all been killed at one industrial sight, however, he writes that "in certain areas, it was felt that not enough people had been killed" (36). Pilger writes that "In the pogroms of 1965-66, Suharto's generals often used Islamicist groups to attack communists and anybody who got in the way" (46).

Following the war, western powers remained in close contact with the new regime. In 1967, while the evangelicals were celebrating Israel's victory in America, a new hell was born in Indonesia. That year the Time-Life Corporation subsidized a meeting in Geneva where Indonesia was rent apart by financial interests. At this meeting, "all of the corporate giants of the West were represented: the major oil companies and banks, General Motors, Imperial Chemical Industries, British Leyland, British-American Tobacco, American Express, Siemens, Goodyear, the International Paper Corporation, US Steel. Across the table were Suharto's men" (39). They had all come to Geneva to attend a conference ironically titled "To Aid in the rebuilding of a Nation," the second day of which they really got down to business. According to Jeffrey Winters, a "professor at Northwestern University" who examined the conference documents along with a graduate student, "they divided up into five different sections: mining in one room, services in another, light industry in another, banking and finance in another; and what Chase Manhattan did was sit with a delegation and hammer out policies that were going to be acceptable to them and their investors." It was unlike anything that he had seen previously in any

other developmental investment program (41). Sukharno had refused international loans from organizations like the World Bank. The nation had no debts when he was overthrown. But "from 1967, Indonesia was awash with World Bank dollars" (42). The nation continued to be awash with violence too. World Bank management refuses to admit moral culpability for giving money to a regime that was notable in its human rights violation and for the terrorization of its own people. Suharto's government ended up running up a \$262 billion debt. This amount is "170 per cent of its gross domestic product. There is no debt like it on earth. It can never be repaid. It is a bottomless hole." The World Bank also refuses to forgive the debt that was incurred by a brutal dictator. The exploited people of Indonesia, who had no voice in the process, are being held accountable (44-46). In 1997, the World Bank was celebrating Indonesia as a great success story of neo-liberal economics. Shortly thereafter, however, that economy fell apart. In "1998, General Suharto was forced to resign after thirty years as dictator, taking with him severance pay estimated at \$15 billion, the equivalent of almost 13 percent of the country's foreign debt" (18).



Other areas of the globe have tales that directly mirror this, including Afghanistan and Iraq. Following that revolution in Russia in 1917, the ruler of Afghanistan "surrounded by radical intellectuals who looked to Enlightenment ideals from Europe and the bold example from Petrograd, Amanullah briefly united a small educated elite with the bulk of the tribes, and won a famous military victory against British arms in 1919" (203). Amanullah initiated a relationship with the Soviet Union that would impact Afghanistan for decades. Sultan-Galiev "received the messages from Kabul warmly on behalf of the Comintern" (204). Trotsky, having heard of this, went further yet, arguing that "the Road to Paris and London lies via the towns of Afghanistan, the Punjab and Bengal" (204). In more recent history, Afghanistan experienced another leftward lurch when "Zahir Shah was ousted by his cousin Daud, who declared a republic with the support of local communists and financial aid from the USSR. When, in April of 1979, the shah of Iran convinced Daud to turn against the communist factions in his army and administration, they staged a self-defensive coup" (206). The communists were able to hold power, but barely. Bloody conflicts, including those initiated by the communists themselves

across Afghanistan, punctuated their regime, but under their rule, the expectations of Afghani citizens began to change. Education improved as did access to schooling for girls and women. In some cases co-ed schooling was initiated. Literacy rates improved as did the standard of living for the citizenry (206).

The United States, however, had different plans. Jimmy Carter, that first evangelical president of the twentieth century, felt entitled, as did his cabinet, to disrupt the development of an alliance between the Soviet Union and the Afghani communists by supporting Islamic militants as disruptors. Ali states that the "United States, taking over the historic role of Britain, soon started to undermine the regime by arming the religious opposition to it, using the Pakistani army as a conduit" (206). Zbigniew Brzezinski was unapologetic about U.S. involvement through Carter's policies when, in an interview with *Le Nouvel Observateur* stated that "in reality, secretly guarded until now, is completely otherwise: Indeed it was 3 July 1979 that President Carter signed the first directive for secret aid to the opponents of the pro-Soviet regime" (207). When asked if he felt any regrets about setting off a war that devastated two nations, Brzezinski

states that he has no regrets at all. It was an amazing opportunity to punish the Soviets by helping to create a battle field in Afghanistan that would further decimate an already impoverished country. "We now have the opportunity," said Brzezinski, "of giving the USSR its Vietnam War" (207).

Following the war, the U.S. was not interested in setting up a humanitarian regime. If the brutality of the communist regime was a fear, it did not impact the selection of the next rulers of the area. Ali writes that "Washington's role in the Afghan war has never been a secret, but few in the West were aware that the United States utilized the intelligence services of Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan to create, train, finance and arm an international network of Islamin militants to fight the Russians" (208). Several different religious and ethnic factions vied for control of the country, but none seemed to be able to maintain control. Ali states that "When Pakastani generals pleaded with the Saudi dynasty to send a princeling from the royal family to lead the holy war, no volunteers were forthcoming. Osama was sent as a friend of the palace instead" (209). Additionally, when no single force could claim sovereignty, "the Pakistan army shifted

its backing to the Taliban it had been training in religious schools in the North-West frontier since 1980" (208).

U.S. support for those "Islamic extremists" that are now the enemy of note was not a great concern at the time. Afghanistan was caught in a battle between two world systems, communism and capitalism, and internally devastated by both sides, but, eventually, capitalism won. And that capitalism is not averse to fundamentalism of any kind. The new regime would roll back any of the rights previously gained—limited though they were—and initiate a brutal dictatorship under which the entire population suffered, especially the women. Apart from leftists considered too radical in the West, no one was commenting upon the resistance within that country from groups such as the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan, whose founder had been murdered. Ali writes that

American business was less hypocritical. Responding to complaints about a pipeline it is constructing from Central Asia through Afghanistan to Pakistan, a spokeswoman for the US oil giant Unocal explained why capitalism is gender-blind: 'We disagree with some US feminist groups on how Unocal should respond to this

issue . . . We are guests in countries who have sovereign rights and their own political, social, religious beliefs. Walking away from Afghanistan would not solve the problem. (212)

Again, in Iraq, the same structure holds true. Anti-communist activities provide an opportunity for a brutal dictator to come to power and repress his own people with the support of U.S. business. In 1957, Abdul-Karim Qasim came to power with a broad center-left coalition that included significant support from the Iraqi Communist Party. Qasim, who attempted to mitigate Ba'athist power within his regime, was the target of an assassination two years later. Ali, in *Bush in Babylon*, states that "A special unit of the Ba'ath, which included a 22-year-old party activist from Tikrit named Saddam Hussein, carried out the action" (80). During the attempt, the Iraqi Communist Party rallied around Qasim, ensuring that the center-left coalition would not be destroyed. Qasim, upon returning to power after his recovery, was not grateful. Foreshadowing the kind of political machinations Saddam Hussein would use to gain power, Qasim selected a portion of the communists to allie with, calling them the true leaders of their party. The rest were kicked out of the

government (81). This did not, however, split the solidarity within the Iraqi Communist Party for the time being. Its members understood the nature of the purge and left with the disgraced former members of the regime; it was Qasim's coalition that was split.

In a few years, the Ba'ath party initiated a coup that overthrew Qasim and signaled the waning of the communists' power (87). Additionally, communists were singled out for brutal purges. In the mid-1960s, "the repression of Iraqi communists was systematic and brutal, prefiguring the massacres in Indonesia" which would shortly follow. The Ba'athists, with Saddam Hussein occupying a position of influence, attempted to further consolidate power through cleverly viscous political maneuvering. Anti-communist in its arrival at power, the party moved from that position in order to make communist opposition visible. Rather than an attempt to split the communists, Hussein attempted to draw them out by giving them the option of joining the official government (117). The Iraqi Communist Party accepted the offer in 1972, but soon found they were powerless to make any changes in governing structures or reform, until they were expelled from the government in 1978. Saddam had come to power, he wanted to move closer to the United States,

"and to demonstrate the finality of this break to their new friends in Washington, Saddam Hussein had thirty-one members of the Communist Party executed on the pretext that they had ignored repeated warnings and set up party cells in the armed forces" (121). The next year Saddam was President. Also in the year, political turmoil in neighboring Iran resulted in the overthrow of the former government by conservative religious forces. The United States "was desperately in search of a regional replacement. Might Saddam suffice? He might" (122). Even if he was not the right man for rule, he certainly was a money maker who that could destabilize Iran. From 1980 to 1988, Iraq and Iran were at war. When it ended "262,000 Iranians and 105,000 Iraqis perished in the conflict. At least 700,000 were injured" and "Iraq wasted US\$74-US\$91 billion on waging the war and UK£41.94 billion on military imports" (129).

The list of U.S. counterrevolutionary and anticommunist activity is extensive. While countries struggle to form alliances across the three continents they struggle against an already existing U.S. tri-continentalism in the service of global capital. The events of September 11 were terrible, but it is equally

terrible that, in the political climate in the U.S. that that statement must be repeated and repeated by anyone who critiques foreign policy. These policies are done in the name of the country by an elite group in order to serve an elite group. Criticism of that group is not criticism of the citizens of the country itself. The perception that arguing against the elites is un-American rests on the supposition that who they are and what they do defines Americanness for the rest of the nation and upon the right's too often successful conflation of the two.



**Chapter Nine:**  
***Mass, Class and Left***

In dealing with American domestic issues, this volume demonstrates that U.S.-centric, capitalistic development depends upon a possessive individualism that naturalizes a transcendent, exceptional "Americanness" by privileging maleness, whiteness, heterosexuality and class position. The 1996 welfare reform and defense of marriage acts demonstrates that dominant political movements in the United States have aligned against those that are the most vulnerable within their borders in order to consolidate electoral-political power. This rearticulation necessitates material support for the conservation of power within those groups that are already privileged. This movement, presenting itself as revolutionary, is demonstrated in this work to have a history that stretches back to the antebellum south and beyond. Although this movement seeks to defend the idea of history, an actual account of the genealogies of that history indicates that, in current political circumstances, this move in and of itself is a defense of the racial, sexual, and classist nature of American society.

In the first chapter, I stated that I am bad American Marxist. The two following chapters of this volume present

a critique of economism in which, I hope, I have presented an examination of the ways in which economic and political realities can be logically combined. The desire to determine what that class of revolutionaries within the core countries will look like is important, but, at the same time, extending that study to include those outside of those core communities, those countries continuously beset by U.S. and Euro-centric imperialism do not reflect the reality of socialist revolution in the twentieth century. Additionally, in the third chapter, this work provides a historiography of Marxist anti-imperialism that critiques west-centric thought. At the same time, this chapter includes an interpretation of Marxist theory that does not create a romanticized dualism between those countries that have benefited from imperialism and those that continue to suffer, which would facilitate a commitment to bourgeois nationalism that would be a detriment to any form of resistance to capitalism.

While not overly original in this volume, the two meet in the ways in which a specific group of individuals within a dominant class define what should be best for the rest of society. In the opening chapter, I quoted Friere as stating that "leaders who deny praxis to the oppressed

thereby invalidate their own praxis. By imposing their word on others, they falsify that word and establish a contradiction between their methods and their objectives" (120). While Friere was speaking in reference to those that believe that they are creating revolutionary change, this volume demonstrates, that this perspective defines both the onslaught of reactionary forces and the beginnings of a resistance to western imperialism in Marxist thought.

Additionally, it is my hope that I have connected with a small segment of the left. Maoist doctrine states that for resistance to be successful, mass, class and left must be aligned. My hope here is that a small corner of that left universe might find something useful in what I have written here.

That corner of the left that I am representing is American studies. In writing this within that field, I am reminded of what Janice Radway presented in her presidential address to the ASA in 1998. In her address, Radway took the opportunity to question "what's in a name" in order to provide a reassessment of where the field defined as American studies might be going, taking specific issue with the kind of chauvinism that is inherent in a field that claims for itself in its name the ability to

speaking on behalf of all the Americas while scholars in the field generate work that comes from and reflects upon, mostly, the United States. She states that the "question that I am to pose tonight is what the association can do at this particular moment, on the brink of a new century, and at the edge of the so-called 'American' continent, to ensure that its very name does not enforce the achievement of premature closure through an implicit, tacit search for the distinctively American 'common ground'" (3). She argues that Americanness "is relationally defined and historically and situationally variable because it is dependent upon and therefore intertwined with those affiliations, identities, and communities it must actively subordinate in order to press the privileged claims of the nation upon individuals or groups" (10). As the construction of America depends upon the subordination of non-Americans abroad, it similarly depends upon an internal subordination. She states that "the state and the political economy of the United States are themselves entirely dependent on the internal, imperial racialization of the population" (11).

In order to be more honest about our pursuits, Radway wonders if we should simply call our discipline "United

States Studies" and be done with it. If we are to reflect the contributions to the discipline from scholars outside of the United States, Radway suggests the title of "International Association for the Studies of the United States." If we really mean to take seriously the idea of speaking on behalf of the Americas we should consider indicating that relationship by calling the discipline "Inter-American Studies Association." But if we are to consider the impact of the United States globally, on its construction of Americanness and its relationship with other nations and peoples beyond its borders, Radway argues that we might simply do away with "America" altogether and call ourselves the "Society for Intercultural Studies."

While this meditation on a name is most certainly productive in that it brings to light underlying assumptions about the field that have to be negotiated and renegotiated, it seems, in many of the yearly ASA presidential addresses, the fixation on naming provides an avenue for not placing the power of the United States and the economic system that it benefits from into question. This is something that Radway understands, and, though post-colonial criticism seems to be what she is placing hope in for making the change, she feels that the change

towards a more globally engaged American studies must "track" how and why the process of globalization benefits one part of the world at the expense of many others. On the other hand, as it does this it must not become so diffuse as to do away with the specificities of location and historical particularities.

While it is beneficial to consider the prospects of American Studies future, it is just as beneficial to understand the discipline's past. The following year's presidential address deals with the success of the neo-conservative right in insuring resistance to and criticism of the public relevance of "left" academic research (Kelly 12). But in reference to that past, the discipline itself has a troubling past. It is ironic to me, for instance, that while I challenge the utilization of the "heart of darkness" motif in films like *Apocalypse Now* or *Platoon*, one of the "founders" of my discipline had an epiphany "on the edge of a jungle of central Africa" where he discovered "the mission of expounding what I took to be the innermost propulsion of the United States, while supervising, in that barbaric tropic, the unloading of drums of case oil flowing out of the inexhaustible wilderness of America" (qtd. in Wise 302). While the ideological connections with

conservative construction of Africa and parasitic dependence on its continued otherness might be disconcerting here, the corporate support that American studies received during the Cold War is even more so. As Allen Davis has pointed out, during this period "beginning in 1949, the Carnegie Corporation made large grants to support the development of American Studies" and that the following year "the Coe Foundation gave a half-million dollar grant to Yale to support American studies" (355). Additionally, "both the American Studies Association and the *American Quarterly* which preceded it were organized in a climate of patriotism and consensus" (356). Even my desire for internationalist approach within American studies is not new or without a problematic context. Norman Holmes Pearson, one time chair of American studies at Yale and one time president of ASA, was once "also head of the X-2, the counter intelligence branch of the OSS in London" (355). And in Europe during the Cold War, many of the "landmarks in the development of American Studies" were "related to American hospitality and influence" (355). These problems, as Kelly's 1999 presidential address testifies, are not behind practitioners in the discipline. Folks that want to stop the kinds of research that I want

to do, the kinds of courses I would like to teach, and the kinds of works I would like to publish are more common than rare. Ultimately, what I am arguing in reference to my discipline is that there is indeed room enough for a necessary critique of US imperialism, nationalism and individualism.

This work is an attempt to create what Robert Andrew Nolan has described as a critique that is at base radical praxis. In the previous chapters, I have sought to demonstrate that the conjunction where ideology and economic factors meet is within the field of politics (Nowlan 362).

At base, my opening chapter was an attempt to theorize the ways in which a politicized critique can attempt to bring together those elements made disparate by a capitalist system in a single, coherent narrative. The process is vexed, but I hope that what that chapter sets out as a political agenda holds true for the rest of this volume. According to Nowlan, "radical criticism is a kind of criticism which develops a critique of the limitation of non-radical criticism, and this means that radical criticism is an attempt to supersede the limitations of non-radical criticism" (362). Nowlan differentiates



between several different levels of Marxist critique, noting that simply stating "capitalism sucks," though it is perhaps correct, is not sufficient in reaching that level where critique becomes praxis (364).

In bridging American Studies with a commitment to resisting dominant ideology, the comments of E. San Juan in reference to his experience as the chair of the Ethnic Studies department at Washington State University are significant. In wondering if the discipline itself has become too corrupted for political work, San Juan writes:

We may need to phase out or eventually sublimate into some other form, the Ethnic Studies program and relocate the focus of our energies elsewhere, in teach-ins outside and inside the university, in various organizing movements. We then ought to disperse our faculties to the traditional departments that meanwhile have become entrenched bastions of "white supremacy" . . . And we may need to intervene directly in the "culture wars" . . . (163)

I have no easy answer to this dilemma. It is true that, as resistant disciplines become more mainstream that, at the same time, they lose the ability to have the political impact that the practitioners within the discipline might

hope. Contrarily, it is difficult for those that hold a job outside of academia to believe that their employment will always duplicate their political concerns. If it is to be believed that contradictions between employment and politics can be overcome by simple choice, that choice will always be the privilege of those that can count on other financially equitable options. While academe might not offer complete political fulfillment, it is also possible that engagement in the popular culture wars is not excluded from those working within academia. San Juan has never lost this political focus, but it is evident in his criticism that he believes that there is no safe space from which to continue his work.

When I read Ann Coulter's *Treason*, I first noted, as any reader would, that she represented Marxists as the paragon of all evil. Her main target, however, is not those that are interested in socialism but the democratic party itself. Coulter's book, a bestseller, is an attempt to define everyone who does not follow a rightist path as a traitor to everything that could be conceived as moral. Her book is essentially a lengthy diatribe against democrats as she tries to recuperate the mythology of McCarthy, and at the end of the matter, it is the Democrats

who are seen as desirous of social revolution not the Marxists. She states that "instead of wondering why foreigners hate Americans, a more fruitful inquiry might be why Americans are beginning to hate Democrats" (230).

Coulter, among the legion that is easily dismissed despite her ubiquity on political talk shows and syndicated columns, strikes on a significant interpretation of Marxism in America. Following the publication of the transcripts from the Venona Project which linked the Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA) of America directly with Stalinist espionage, very few defenders of Marxism have referenced them. Bryan Palmer, a Trotskyist, in "Rethinking the Historiography of United States Communism" states that, under Stalin, "the aspirations and expansive potential of revolutionary Communism were suffocated in bureaucratization, compromise of political principle, abandonment of theoretical and programmatic consistency, waning of commitment to socialism and its spread throughout the world, and a narrowing of agendas to the most defensive and mundane" (143). In essence, after Lenin, much of the Soviet Union's interaction with complacent parties in the western world was one of opportunism. Stalin, theorizing what socialism could be in his own country, attempted to

utilize socialists in other countries to extend his capabilities. In the east, in China for example, the history of Stalinist Russia's attempt to manipulate a national party is well documented (Young 152-155, for example). In the west, that resistance has been abandoned to reactionary forces or, when the new left attempts to celebrate any semblance of independence in this regard, is dismissed by scholars like Palmer (149-52).

The American Marxist past is one that is being recovered, and a host of political parties are successfully engaging in an attempt to reach the masses. The divide, however, between academia and the mass and class alignment remains. One hopes that, in the future, all three can come together at last.

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